

A HAPPY LIFE

By

William C. Hershberger

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A Happy Life

BY

WILLIAM C. HERSHBERGER



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Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I
say, Rejoice.—Phil. 4:4.

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TO

My departed mother, whose admonitions since I was ordained to the ministry, and whose kindly influences through life helped me to realize and to preserve in writing these lines relating to a happy life,
This book is affectionately dedicated

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE		5
ENDURANCE	<i>Chapter I</i>	7
PATIENCE	<i>Chapter II</i>	22
WATCHFULNESS	<i>Chapter III</i>	35
HOPE	<i>Chapter IV</i>	49
FAITH	<i>Chapter V</i>	62
LOVE	<i>Chapter VI</i>	72
JOY	<i>Chapter VII</i>	83
OBEDIENCE	<i>Chapter VIII</i>	95
ADOPTION	<i>Chapter IX</i>	104
PEACE	<i>Chapter X</i>	112
GRACE	<i>Chapter XI</i>	120
HEAVEN	<i>Chapter XII</i>	130

PREFACE

This volume is not intended to present new ideas regarding the once happy state of man, but rather to call to recollection and impress the old truths which have been taught in the Christian Church from the apostolic times down to the present.

Many times, in the ages since the days of the early Christians, the foundation truths upon which the happiness of the Christian depends have been obscured and almost lost. Yet God has not permitted His precious revelation to be entirely forgotten; but has had, in every age, men who walked and talked with Him.

This book does not pretend to be a complete treatise on the subject of a happy life, but only a simple statement of familiar truths in the familiar language of everyday life.

The author gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to the Publishing Committee of the Mennonite Publication Board and to Bro. J. A. Ressler as book editor, for valuable services in bringing this volume to completion.

With a prayer that it may fulfil its mission, and that at least some may be benefited by reading it, the author subscribes himself,

Yours for a happy life,

William C. Hershberger.

CHAPTER I

ENDURANCE

Just what constitutes a happy life is a question. Some think that a life of sin, in which the will has its own course, is the most happy. Others claim that a life of strict obedience to the Master is more happy than any other. In the following chapters I shall try to show wherein lies true happiness.

So far as the pleasure of indulgence is concerned, a life of sin is, in one sense, more free. But in consequence of sin there follows remorse of conscience, and this destroys more happiness than any indulgence in sin could bring. True it is that in the Christian life we must deny ourselves a great many of the carnal desires of the mind. It will not do for the Christian to follow the world. The denial of these worldly pleasures, however, does not detract from the happiness of the Christian life; but the indulgence in them does more than detract; it robs us of the happiness God intends for us. To enjoy life in its fulness we must come to the point of which the apostle James speaks when he says, "Behold, we count them happy which endure." This passage of Scripture plainly teaches us that true happiness lies not in indulgence but in endurance.

Granted that indulgence does bring pleasure of a certain kind, we know that such pleasure lasts only here in this life, not through all eternity. "But they that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13). "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (Jas. 1:12). We need only to look at the lives of the apostles to see the happiness of a life of endurance. Their persecutions and trials were many, and yet, when imprisoned or otherwise persecuted, they murmured not. When cruel persecutors were stoning him to death, Stephen could, at the last moment of life, look into that great beyond and cry unto God to forgive his murderer.—Wonderful lives! Persecuted and tried as they were, we must conclude that, on the whole, they were happy lives.

The question of the happy life resolves itself into many phases. In the paragraph above we spoke of the apostles' happiness in endurance. We shall now try to give a few illustrations from present day life. There lived in a village near Burnley a girl who was persecuted in her home because of her living a Christian life. She struggled on bravely, seeking help from God, and rejoicing that she was a partaker of Christ's sufferings. The struggle was too much for her. At last God saw it was enough and her sufferings were ended. When they came to take off the clothes from the poor, dead body, they

found a paper sewn inside her dress, and on it was written, "He openeth not His mouth."

Is not this a noble example of silent endurance? How much better it would be if all persecutions were thus endured patiently and the strength to do so sought from God, who has all power. The source of that girl's happiness was One to whom the sinner cannot go while living a life of sin. Oh, what a Friend we have in Jesus, who will bear all our troubles and sorrows! His very promise to do this alone brings us much joy. Let us think what Christ had to endure in order to bear all our sins and sorrows. If it was necessary for Christ to endure, will it not be for our good to endure our trials patiently with Him for our example?

This life on earth, whether Christian or not, has its sorrows to meet. However, in the matter of meeting sorrows, the Christian has great advantages over the non-Christian. First, if we ask Him to do so, Christ will bear our sorrows and troubles. Second, we have the assurance of boundless joy in the future life. Third, there will be true success, with peace and contentment in the life that now is. On the other hand, the sinner, while he remains in sin, has neither consolation nor hope in the Savior. Satan, though pretending to be his friend, can do nothing but heap sorrow upon sorrow, making this life bitter, and offering in the end, as a reward for servitude, only eternal torment and anguish. Why

should any one choose the miserable life of sin with its end in eternal ruin, rather than the joyful Christian life here and the eternal crown of happiness over yonder, even though they be purchased by enduring for a moment?

The apostle James lived in the days of persecution. So "endurance" is one of the most natural words for him to use. He was at the head of the church in which the other James was slain, Peter imprisoned, Stephen stoned to death, and others of his co-laborers executed. But when persecutions cease, when times of rest and quiet come, have the words still a meaning to us? Yes, they are as true as ever now. He alone who has endured is truly happy. An easy life does not bring out the powers of the soul. Such a life tries the surface; it does not search what is deeper. Endurance brings out the true virtues of the soul.

We go to the wharf and look on a newly constructed vessel. There she lies, as beautiful a specimen of the ship-builder's art as human eye ever beheld. She is perfect in outline, neatly painted, unsoiled by soot from the furnaces below—there are no scars of any kind to be found on her sides, partitions, or decks. She is a perfect beauty. Thousands of spectators have looked upon her and admired her beautiful workmanship. But look! Away down the harbor comes a ship in from the ocean. People are coming to the wharf to see her dock. At last she is alongside and her shore lines are securely

fastened. Look at her as she lies at rest. Her once bright paint is faded, her sides look dingy and worn. She has none of the beauty of the new ship. But what mean these cheers that rise from the hundreds of people waiting there? They are for the ship that has endured the storms and crossed the seas, transporting cargo to and from foreign parts. It is her endurance that makes this ship so much admired. So in the Christian life, endurance brings not only admiration and respect from others but real happiness from within.

Think of Daniel and the prophets of old, how they endured, and the comfort they received from God. What consolation. Daniel was cast into the lion's den for not obeying the king's decree. He endured the persecution. But what a joy it must have been to him the next morning when he could prove to the world that his faith in God had not been in vain.

But Daniel's persecutions were not at an end, nor did God cease revealing Himself to His faithful servant. King Belshazzar thought, as all sinners do, that by getting a number of his favorites together and reveling in sin he could have a happy time. In his banquet hall we see, not vessels of porcelain or cut glass, but of the finest silver and pure gold. And to the sound of Oriental music we see coming the king and his mighty throng, a thousand of his lords. When his heart is merry because of the wine he has drunken, he commands that the golden and

silver vessels which his father had taken from the holy temple of God at Jerusalem be brought that he and his godless company may drink wine from them. The drunken revel goes on and the sound of music and dancing is heard. Suddenly the king's countenance changes and his whole frame quakes with fear. He cries out in his fear and consternation. On the wall opposite him he sees the fingers of a man's hand writing. And the letters remain there after the writing is finished. But no one can read the mysterious writing on the wall. The astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers are at their wits' end. Then the queen comes to the banquet hall and reminds the king of one who is absent from the drunken feast, the captive Daniel. Quickly brought in by order of the king, Daniel easily reads the writing upon the wall and pronounces the doom of the haughty monarch. That very night the writing was fulfilled and king Belshazzar was slain. Though the words, "The wages of sin is death," were not written until long after this, they express a truth that has stood from the time sin entered the world and will stand as long as sin remains in the world. Those words told the cause of the fate of Belshazzar.

That was the time for Daniel to show to that gay company, and to the whole world, the power there lies in a consecrated life of faith. Daniel, though a captive, must have enjoyed his life in God's service. But Belshazzar had a sensual joy only for

a moment and then the eternal, horrible life in torment. Does it pay to live a life of sin and folly? The joy of the world lasts only for a short time and then passes away and in its place comes the bitterest sorrow and woe.

The sinner usually looks upon the restrictions of the Christian life as being grievous. But he does not know that, if these restrictions are heeded because of the love we have for Christ, they are a means of promoting happiness, since they only mark out the course which is for our highest good and usefulness. After all, even in the natural life, is not our greatest pleasure found in the love of and our love for our dear companions and associates? It is the experience of those who have been shipwrecked and cast upon some dreary island, that their greatest distress, so far as the natural life is concerned, is the separation from home and friends. They are continually longing to see their loved ones again. They are probably separated from home and loved ones for ever, and we feel that their condition is sad indeed. But you will see a yet sadder condition by looking about you in the life of every community. Like a vast ocean steamer under a full head of steam ploughing through the waters, the world is hurrying on in the sea of sin. The passengers are jovial and careless and seem to have no thought of their real condition. But that ship is doomed to destruction, and when she is lost there is not even an island to flee to. They are caught

in the maelstrom of perdition, by which they are carried to the lake of fire and brimstone where the smoke ascends forever and the fire is not quenched.

But hopeless as the situation seems, there is still a way of escape for those who will avail themselves of it—the lifeboat, Christ Jesus. Those who refuse to enter the lifeboat will most certainly be lost; but there is a sure promise that He will not reject any who come to Him, and He who commanded the winds and the storm and they obeyed Him, will be certain to land the anxious sinner who trusts Him safe in the haven of rest. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

There are those who are far from enjoying the service of God because they expect to be carried to heaven “on flowery beds of ease.” The joy of the Christian life is for every one who will surrender to God’s will and receive the joy He has for him. The man who enjoys his trade most is the one works the hardest at it. So the one who enjoys his Christian life most is the one who works the hardest, and endures the trials and persecutions which come to him with the most patience. There is no use in meditating over the ills of life and complaining about them to others. To do so would bring unhappiness to others and cause nothing but unhappiness to ourselves. Patient endurance of trial, hopeful looking forward to a better future, simple trust in God, will not only lengthen the natural life on

earth, but prepare for the brighter, better life in eternity. "Happy is the man that endures all things for Christ's sake."

Long-suffering is but another term for endurance. To suffer long with patient endurance, tends to the development of strength. The Greeks of old realized the truth of this very keenly and worked and trained accordingly. They regarded weakness as degrading, and went about strenuously to secure strength, for strength was god-like. Many were the hardships they endured during the period of the development of their muscles. The same ideal may exist in our spiritual life. We should all strive to be strong in the Lord, even though hardships must be endured to gain strength. If we realized the benefit of hardships, they might become a pleasure to us, as they are, really, only the means of strengthening and developing the soul. Thus we become more able to resist the temptations of Satan, and our life becomes purer and better.

Who of you who are wealthy, could see this wealth taken from you without a murmur? Who could endure the loss of property, the gains of life-long and honorable toil, with patience? How often we see cheerfulness and patience decline with the decline of profits. In many cases the loss of property has led to suicide, as if all the desirable part of life had departed with the departure of riches. What a contrast when the Spirit of God has enlightened the mind. He shows the compara-

tive value of all things. He brings the next world into comparison with this and makes us to realize the vain glory of the one and the everlasting splendor of the other. When we have learned this comparison fully we may see wealth take wings without the loss of courage, of patience, or of hope.

How well we have this exemplified in the life and character of Job. When he looks at his trials and losses in the light of eternity, he understands that what was taken away from him has not been essential to his real life. It required a spiritually enlightened vision to enable him to say, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25, 26). If financial loss, bitter persecutions, sore afflictions, should cross our pathway, it behooves us to endure all with great patience. Christ "was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." May not we, then, meet the trials and temptations which come to our lives, which He understands so well, in the strength which He supplies?

We sometimes see people looking into an open grave at the darkness of death, yet with faces radiant as if beholding there bright sunshine. This is because they know that the departed one has passed into a better, brighter day, and hope lights up the pathway that leads to the happy reunion beyond. Inspired with the assurance of God's

sustaining grace, we can endure all things without murmuring, patient in the midst of grief and trial, upheld by the eternal God.

"Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Peter was sincere in his question. He had forsaken all, perhaps realizing little of the hardships that might come to him as the result of his following the Savior. He looked ahead and, naturally, wondered. Jesus met his question kindly and answered definitely, even though Peter may not have understood at the time, the full meaning of the Savior's words. The Christian today must follow in the same way. We may not always understand, but God will see that we have sufficient light as we press onward.

Sincere sacrifice for the sake of Christ and His cause will be rewarded, and it is the privilege of every Christian to do something along this line. Missionaries and evangelists are under no more obligations to sacrifice for the cause than any one else. Every member of the Church of Christ may have a share in the work of sacrificing and enduring for His sake. How sweet to trust in Jesus and make sacrifices for Him. God intends that as man's love should develop for his Creator; it shall also develop for His creatures. Especially is this true in family life and relations. The richness of God's love will intensify the richness of man's love toward his fellow man.

To forsake business and friends and home for

the mere sake of inviting hardship would be folly. There are those in active Christian work who do forsake much for the sake of the Gospel. It is not necessary however, to be a missionary or an evangelist to be of use in the Master's service. Business and capital, when fully consecrated to God, are a great power for the furtherance of His cause. Happy the Christian who, with consecrated business ability, makes and uses money for the glory of God. To endure in labor and life as a Christian is not a burden but a joy. God's blessings, when compared with our sacrifices, far outweigh them in eternal value. As the steward of God, he who has wealth may do much for the advancement of the kingdom.

A Christian sometimes wonders, as a follower of Christ, what must be his attitude toward the world's amusements and pleasures. There is a difference between the follies of the world and real pleasure. If any man has a right to the pleasures of the earth it is the Christian. He has a right to inherit its fruits and its blessings. God has given him the ability to enjoy what He has created. The joy the Christian receives from fellowship with created nature makes his life better and purer and nobler. It is a question, after all, whether what we generally call sacrifices in the Christian life are really such. Our sacrifices have been joys, and when our joys shall have become full in the eternal sunshine of the better world, we shall not remember

(that we have sacrificed for Christ, but shall fully realize the richness of His promises.

The reason there are so many professing Christians, who have little or no joy in their religion, is that they are not willing to make sacrifices for the sake of Christ. How can Christianity be a matter of joy to those who are engaged in the amusements of the world, in seeking popular society, in reading worldly literature, while the lids of the good old Bible are covered with dust? Those who are enslaved by the world's dictates, clad in the fashionable gew-gaws of the world, could hardly be expected to be interested in a religious meeting. Little pleasure could there be for such people in the service of Christ.

The person who is not willing to sacrifice and endure for Christ's sake will never have the fullness of joy in this life, and much less in the life to come. Job endured much, but after all his trials were over, God blessed him wonderfully. He was blessed with the fruits of this earth so that he became rich.

The apparent conflict between duty and self-interest has often led people into trouble. It must be remembered that this conflict is only apparent, as our true interest and duty always run along the same line. It is sometimes said that a man must work on the Sabbath, or he must sell his produce on the Lord's day, to make a living for himself and his family. If the question is between

obeying God or starvation, he who trusts God may well put his case in His hands and trust His power to help over hard places. If you cannot be a Christian except by becoming bankrupt let not your name in the newspapers frighten you when your name is already in the Lamb's book of life.

Those who are in danger of being engrossed in business to the exclusion of their spiritual interests, as well as those who are tempted to swerve from the path of rectitude for the sake of worldly gain, may do well to meditate carefully on the expression, "a hundred fold," as Christ used it in His reply to Peter's anxious question. See Matt. 19:29.

As the planets are held in their course by the attraction of the sun, so Christ, the center of our spiritual universe, holds us in the places we ought to be. As God He claims our adoration: as man, our heart's affection. He is the realization of the divine ideal. He is the way to the Father and to the everlasting home of the soul. Through the rugged pathway of this life the Christian makes his way, over rough and dangerous places, amid storms and opposition, until he reaches the beautiful highway that leads to the blissful abode above.

Christ is all and in all. To forsake and follow Him must result in great gain. He is the Friend beloved. When a dear friend comes to visit us, we lay aside all business and everything that would keep us from enjoying his society. Jesus comes and calls us. He announces the joyful news of recon-

ciliation with God. Should we not gladly renounce all else to be received into His everlasting friendship? What a wonderful transformation He makes in mankind. He changes the corrupt earthly creatures into heavenly beings. He raises the spiritually dead into divine life. And faith, simple faith, child-like trust is the means by which we are enabled to receive the holy influence and sweet companionship of the Lord Jesus.

May we, because of these facts, consecrate our all to Christ, patiently endure all things, sacrifice whatever is needed to promote the glory of His name, and finally inherit the kingdom and reign in everlasting bliss.

CHAPTER II

PATIENCE

"In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19). This verse contains very expressive language. To possess one's soul is to be in that state in which man has full control of himself. This state is in opposition to the state of mind in which, owing to an inward agitation, man has lost control of some or all of his faculties. Perfect control of self is essential to happiness.

The separation of the early Christians from the places held by them as holy, and from their comfortable city homes must have been a sore trial to them. We need only remember the ties by which we are bound to the old home of our childhood to realize in part the distress of these early disciples of our Lord. But their dispersion taught them important lessons. They learned that true worship is not confined to any one place, and to look far into the future for their reward of service. Their scattering also led them to go everywhere preaching the word of life and thus hasten the evangelization of the world. Often it seemed to them that they had passed the limit of human endurance. But in each new trial they appealed to God in prayer, and

for those who had the patience to endure, the time of tribulation passed away, and they found themselves living in a fresh atmosphere of hope, with a wider outlook and greater powers for good.

A storm at sea is a grand, magnificent sight. You watch it with thrilling interest and reverence the power that can command the waves and the stormy winds. But you see a ship out upon that sea, tossed to and fro by the foaming waves. Immediately you lose interest in the waves and the storm and your attention is centered in that ship. You anxiously wait and watch to see whether she will hold out until the storm passes over. Man's soul is a precious ship tossed upon the sea of circumstances. Human interest centers not so much in the different circumstances which may surround a life, as in the question of whether a man will be overcome by circumstances or whether he will conquer them; whether circumstance will swallow up the soul or whether the soul will come from the tempest alive and whole.

True patience is manifested, not only in sickness, sorrow, bereavement, and the like, but in temptation to anger as well. We read of a tenant who could not pay his debts at the time they were due, so he begged for more time to pay them, and his debt was forgiven him. However, this tenant also had a debtor who could not pay, and begged for time that he might pay all. His request was refused and the poor man was shame-

fully treated. Because of this manifestation of impatience on the part of the tenant his lord came and took him, cast him in prison, and gave orders that he should be kept there until he had paid the uttermost farthing. So we see that patience is rewarded even in material life.

Evangelists sometimes manifest impatience when the results of their work are not seen at once. It would be better to learn the lesson of patience from Job and wait for the work to develop by God's hand. God knows how fast to develop effort and we should patiently wait to see results. Our efforts may be like the dandelion in the spring, in full bloom at once, or like the mulberry tree that at first gives no evidence of life, but by and by comes into blossom, and in due time, bears its fruit. "In due season we shall reap if we faint not." Patience enables us to enjoy life as God intended we should do. Worrying about things with which we have little or nothing to do destroys our highest good and our highest happiness.

What is patience as Christ speaks of it? It has a twofold meaning, having the idea both of waiting and of submission. It is that frame of mind which is willing to wait as knowing whom it serves, willing to endure as seeing the invisible; recognizing the creaturely attitude of subjection to the Creator; recognizing also the filial relationship which implies a controlling hand and a loving mind in heaven.—The Biblical Illustrator.

Caleb waited forty-five years for his reward of faithfulness when he was sent as a spy to view the land of Canaan. His reward was at last given him and he and his descendants lived happily in their appointed portion. God himself speaks of the patience of Job and in His word points to him as an example to follow.

In Romans 12:12 we are commanded to be "patient in tribulation." Tribulation comes from a word which means a thrashing flail. In our modern language it means anything that hurts or vexes us. Our patience in tribulation is manifested in various ways: (1) By not murmuring against God. The Israelites murmured against God several times and God was much displeased with them for it (Ex. 16:3). (2) By not despairing of deliverance. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance" (Psa. 42:5). (3) By not using unlawful means for getting out of tribulation. (4) By resting satisfied in tribulation. "And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good" (I Sam. 3:18). (5) By being thankful for tribulation. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thes. 5:18).

Few people have learned the true principles of patience. Some people under tribulation are tossed

about like a cork on the sea, without aim or object, not knowing where they will land or whether they will land at all. Such people are under the influence of slothfulness rather than patience. Others are crushed by their tribulations and are lost like a ship which has struck a rock. Some, in despair, have left all human associations because they have not been able to bear up under their trials. But the happy few have learned to use tribulations as pointing out passages of Scriptures which they use as food for their souls. Some kinds of birds, when caged, flutter about their prison and beat themselves against its walls in great excitement. Then after a few days they become accustomed to their new life and contentedly sing their songs as before. So it is with the man who has learned patience when tribulation overtakes him.

Religious
If we could only realize how much patience sweetens life we would exercise it more. Many a difficulty could be overcome if we were more patient with those who seem to persecute us. The mysteries of God's word, too deep for the comprehension of the human mind, are revealed to us through patience. Impatience turns away from these divine mysteries and sinks in the dreary darkness of unbelief.

While patience is not all of a happy life, it is one of the factors which contribute much to it. Patience is not blind to the dark problems of this world and in human nature, but sees them and

grieves over the slow progress of good and the seeming triumph of evil. But it does not despair. Impatience denies the existence of a God and of a superintending Providence. Those who trust in God must realize that He will work out all things for the good of those who love Him and they will exercise patience in waiting His time. Impatient people cannot be happy. But patience gives abundant reward in joy even in this life.

Patience is not only a condition of our enjoyment of this life, but a command of the Creator. We can only be happy to the extent of our faithfulness in obeying the commands laid down in the sacred Word of God. So if we wish our lives to be happy to the fullest extent we must seek to fulfill all of our Lord's commands and to endure all He asks us to endure.

Patience does not imply a want of sensibility to pain or suffering or wrong, but rather a sensitiveness to them. The North American Indian thought it a disgrace to murmur when in pain. He bore the most severe pain with patience. When he was injured he said nothing. When he was sick he patiently waited to either get well or to die, and he waited without complaining.

Impatience does not mean indifference to the labors and trials that are ours. The mind will think of its own future; will have hopes and fears, will have a choice as to the events that pertain to its own happiness. Nothing can destroy these essential

qualities of the human soul. Take away these and man ceases to be man. He who professes not to care about the events of life is not a man possessing Christian patience, nor is the "do nothing" spirit to be confused with Christian patience. There are times when true patience counsels inaction, when the "strength of Israel is to sit still." But this patience of waiting is not sluggishness or idleness. It is watchful inaction like that of a soldier sleeping on his arms, his watch fires always lighted, and the sentinels at their posts. The wrecked mariner in the open sea, clinging to a boat or board for his life, may do so patiently. If, however, he has anything at hand with which he can help himself, an oar, piece of a spar, or a bit of canvas, it would be the height of foolishness for him to console himself with his patience and not do anything. To use these means at hand would be practical proof of his patience.

Patience requires: (1) The consciousness of a right motive. If our motive is unselfish we grow patient under trial in proportion to our unselfishness. We may then work for the good of mankind and the glory of God faithfully, unruffled by opposition or undiscouraged by difficulty. A conscience void of offence toward man and God is essential to true happiness. (2) Christian patience demands confidence in God and in our cause as approved by him. Submission to the will of God is the main element in Christian patience. Patience in labor awaits God's help. The virtue of patience commands little notice

and less admiration because of its quietness. In Christian work especially this grace is needed. Human nature is weak, easily annoyed by opposition and cast down by discouragement. Happy the Christian who in his work can press right on regardless of results, or a lack of them, confident that God, in His own time, and His own way, will reward his labors.

Patience is also needed in case of the affliction of our physical bodies. Suffering must often be endured in this present life. God afflicts us or permits us to be afflicted for some purpose. Patience under these afflictions is one of the essential qualities of a happy Christian life. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

A little German boy and girl were one morning walking to market, each carrying a heavy basket on the head. The girl was grumbling much as they walked along, while the boy went along happy, full of fun, joking at the roughness of the road. After some time the girl asked, "Why is it that you are so happy. I am sure your basket is quite as heavy as mine, and you are not stronger than I. Are you not tired?" The boy replied, "I have a little herb that causes my load to be quite light. You had better place some of it in your basket too." On inquiry from the girl, the boy explained that it was the little herb of patience. If the little boy's example

were followed by every one, a great many people would find joy and happiness where they now see nothing but worry and displeasure.

The great activity of the present day proves the need of enduring patience. The business man with a large income has his worries and trials but has little time to cultivate the grace of patience. The laborer is dissatisfied and eager to get on in life. The Christian professor has not yet attained to it. But all need it, and he who strives for and cultivates this grace will find himself better for the striving, "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise (Heb. 10:36). "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:25). If we cast away confidence, and the joyful hope of a better future, we lose our capacity for patience.

We need to resist temptation. Life is, and always will be, a blessing and a joy. So long as the living Christ and forgiveness of sins through Him are preached, there is no need of despair. We dare not cast away our confidence in a better future. God's promises stand firm.

To the Christian nothing seems so dark, perhaps, as the social condition of the world. Christians become impatient because of the standing in society they occupy. In order that they may be held in higher esteem they would change the doctrines to suit the world. Religion must be so adjusted as not to interfere with society. The plain

teachings of the Gospel must be discarded. Magnificent buildings must be erected at an enormous cost to attract the haughty society people. Churches must be regulated so as not to interfere with the secret societies and must close their doors on lodge night. In short, the work of Satan comes first, and as a final touch to this satanic work, the sacred name of Christ is used hypocritically in mockery of His church. To become impatient with such a condition of society is a great temptation to a true Christian. But far more will be gained by cultivating patience with God's Word, holding fast to what is taught in it, and waiting to see the developing results.

Patience is of more curative value to a sick person than all medicine. Even a well person who is impatient will be in perfect misery, no matter how much of this world's goods he may have. It is the same in spiritual life. A dissatisfied person does not possess what Christ intended that he should have. Each one of us finds lessons in life which need to be learned with patience. It is usually the more difficult ones which, if well worked out, bring us the most satisfaction. To the wilful, hasty, impatient soul, the struggle may be hard; yet, when finished, it is well worth while. The difficult problem, the hard fought battle, the long sought-for victory, when won, bring the greatest joy.

When our aims are hindered and thwarted, patience, if allowed to develop, will bring about a rich fruitage of joy and peace. Men who have been

sustained in the hour of grief and gloom, prove the truth of the power of patience. Patience must be cultivated. It does not grow of itself. It would seem so easy if we could take the experience of older persons and make them our own without effort. But each one has to learn the lessons of patience for himself.

In order that we may enjoy happy relations one with another we need to exercise patience. Even persons in the closest ties of friendship see life differently and will have occasional differences of opinion. Patience teaches how to live, not in the absence of differences, but in spite of them. We need to exercise forbearance with each other, to exercise patience with our children, to exercise it in our church life, and in every relationship and activity of life.

Our brother sees matters differently from us. His view may even be wrong in the light of God's Word. Yet it is our Christian duty to be patient with him. Time will bring opportunity for explanation that will keep up happy relations between us.

The harvest may be long in ripening. It seems to us sometimes that God is holding us in suspense and that the end we seek will never be attained. Patience is the remedy for the weariness of waiting. Our heaviest afflictions will seem but light and but for a moment if we exercise patience in bearing

them, and after the toils of earth are over there comes an eternity of peaceful rest.

Patient endurance is commendable and is promised its reward in all cases except one. Peter says that it is no glory to us to be buffeted for our faults and bear it patiently. To suffer for wrong doing is in itself no credit to a person, and to bear such suffering patiently has in itself no promise of reward. "But if, *when ye do well*, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, *this is acceptable with God.*"

In His public teaching our Lord made much of the virtue of patience. Those are blessed, He says, who suffer for righteousness' sake. The true followers of Christ will not find peace in exemption from suffering, but in patiently enduring it. "In your patience possess ye your souls." Nay, more. We are to welcome trials. Christ Himself by His example, taught the great lesson of patience. When He was struck in the face, when He was spat upon, when the crown of thorns was pressed upon His brow, when the nails were driven through His hands and feet, He bore it patiently, without a murmur. And can not we bear our little persecutions for Christ's sake?

In conclusion, we wish to note a few elements which enter into the patience of God: (1) *Provocation.* Where there is nothing to try the temper there can be no exercise of patience. We have never done anything to merit the favor of God and have in so many ways done so much to provoke Him to anger.

Yet with what boundless patience He bears with us all. (2) *Sensitiveness.* Where there is no tenderness or capacity for feeling there can be no exercise of patience. God is infinitely sensitive. He pleads with His people, "Oh, do not this abominable thing I hate." He feels pain for every sin we commit. Yet His patience with us is everlasting. (3) *Power of resentment.* When a being has not the power to resent an insult or to punish a provocation, though he may feel it and know it, his forbearance is not patience but simply weakness. God is all powerful. With a single breath He might destroy all His enemies on earth. If God can be patient with us under such circumstances, does it not behoove us to exercise more patience in our life on earth? Let us live more consecrated lives, cause Him more joy by our conduct, and permit Him to mete out to us the unspeakable riches of a happy life on earth and a perfect life beyond.

CHAPTER III

WATCHFULNESS

"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 25:13). Blessed will be the man who is found watching in the day when the Savior makes His second appearance. In the parable of the ten virgins we see two groups, one of five wise virgins, the other of five foolish virgins. The wise virgins could sleep because they were so well prepared for the coming of the bridegroom that they dismissed all care. The others slept because they were too careless to watch or to make preparation. The cry of the coming of the bridegroom aroused them about the midnight hour. All began to trim their lamps. The lamps of the foolish virgins had gone out. While they spent their time trying to borrow oil and going to buy it, the bridegroom came and the wise virgins went with him into the house—"and the door was shut." Then, too late, came the foolish virgins also. They called, they knocked, but the voice which replied was not a voice of welcome, but of doom. It was a sad time for them.

What a picture of those whom the Savior shall find unprepared at His coming! As it was

with the virgins, so it will be at His appearing. Those who are prepared and watching shall be received into His heavenly abode. The unprepared and the unbelieving shall be left to utter darkness.

When Noah was safe in the ark there were many persons whose hearts were longing to enter, but they could not. I believe that when God had shut the door of the ark and opened the windows of heaven and the flood came upon the earth, there were shrieks of horror and cries of misery everywhere from the unhappy millions who were destroyed. If those people ever had happiness it ended there. But inside the ark was a group of persons who were faithful and watchful. They were in security while the world outside was perishing.

We can readily understand how watchfulness is an element in the happy life. The means by which we can gain happiness beyond this life is found nowhere but in God's Word. The careful search of the scriptures will also reveal the way to true happiness in this life. It is better for our character that we are kept in ignorance of the time of Christ's coming. If we knew just when He will come we might be inclined to go on in sin until near the time of His coming and then quickly get ready to meet Him. But we have no promise of life except for the present moment. A watchful life not only tends to happiness in the life to come but is the highest attainable life here below. Even the angels of heaven know not

the time of the coming of the Son of God. But the command Christ gives to us all is, "Watch."

We have a great many things to watch:

(1) We must watch the little sins of life. Not the century, nor the year, nor the week, nor the day, nor the hour, nor even the minute, is the important element in the passage of time, but the little moment; shorter than the second, for that can be measured. Time is made up of moments too small for the skill of man to measure. It is not the great sins that count for most in destroying Christian happiness but the so-called little sins that are ever present to annoy and take out of our lives the happiness God intends should be there. We must guard against these "little sins" if we would enjoy fully the Christian life. Even the most pious are aware of the presence of these sins and they feel that they are more dangerous than grosser sins. Thieves, in order to rob a house, sometimes open a window to let in a small boy who unlocks the door. Then, when the door is open they can easily enter the house and commit the robbery. So, little sins unlock the conscience for the admission and commission of larger sins. People have sometimes been choked by very small objects, such as a fly, a crumb of bread, or a grape seed. Such insignificant things carry in themselves the cause of death. And the souls may be destroyed by sinful desires, idle words, "white lies," as well as by perjuries, blasphemies, and murders. Those who realize in how many ways the

soul may be ruined will be wide awake and watchful for the encroachment of these little sins.

2. We need to watch against the re-appearance of old sins. The embarkment that once gave way is weakened regardless of the pains taken to repair it. The flames of a burning building may have been put out, but if there is in the ashes a spark of fire left it may burst out into flame anew. Our lives have been weakened by sin. They may be forgiven and washed away, but if we are not watchful and prayerful they may burst forth again at any time. In this we see the benefit of beginning the Christian life early. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Eccl. 12:1).

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. * * * Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour that ye think not." For our service here below, the Lord will serve us above. This is also a strong incentive for us to be watchful. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he

fall" (I Cor. 10:12). All are tempted and none can be too watchful. When a man thinks himself to be strong, then he is weak. But when he feels himself weak and most unworthy, he depends upon the strength of God and God's strength is all powerful. While temptations are placed in our way, none come to us that are not common to man. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13). If God, then, has made a way to escape from committing sin is it not much pleasanter to live in obedience to His commands?

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:17, 18). We are not only required to be watchful for ourselves but also in behalf of others. "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer" (I Pet. 4:7). "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8).

The first characteristic of man's heart which shows the need of a watchful spirit is that quality which causes it to move and grow in and of itself. There would be less need of watchfulness if men were urged to sin only by outside influences. But

sin is in our very nature. One needs to make no special effort to sin. Let the heart have its own course and sin will inevitably result.

Another characteristic of the heart that urges watchfulness is the fact that it can be tempted from without. The sin of the heart can easily be drawn out by external impressions, and the world is full of influences to sin. A harsh word, an angry look, or a bad deed done by another may instantly rouse this disposition of the human nature and cause sin to be committed. Wealth, fame, pleasure, husband, wife, children, friends, honor, position, lands, and such like things, though in themselves perfectly innocent, may be used as an inducement to sin. Notice the temptations to forget God and violate His commandments there are in the society in which we move. Only the watchful and prayerful heart can overcome these temptations.

A third characteristic of the heart is habit. The habit of sinning is such a powerful force that none who once form the habit are able to overcome it by their own strength. Only the grace of God can overcome the wickedness of the human heart. No ruin on earth can be compared with the ruin of the soul. On these conditions of the human heart hinges our happiness or our misery in the future life. Which will you choose, a life of watchfulness and receive a crown of glory or a life of idle indulgence and reap pain, torment, and misery unspeakable in the lake of unquenchable fire?

The safety and success of an army depend upon the watchfulness of its soldiers and sentinels. In the Christian warfare, also, our success depends upon our vigilance. We must exercise watchfulness over ourselves, over our enemies, and pray for divine assistance that we may overcome in our struggles. We may be compared to a general commanding a fortress. He must keep watch over his command to prevent mutiny, keep watch over the enemy so as to be able to repel attacks, and keep watch for the friends who may be coming to his assistance. In the same way we must be watchful over our lives with reference to sin.

"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. 3:2, 3).

This passage of Scripture does not say that Christ will come as a thief to all but only to such as are not waiting for His coming. These who are watching for the coming of Christ will be in readiness for Him. Some look upon preparation for the coming of Christ as an unpleasant duty. But it is a pleasure to get ready for a friend whom we expect to visit us. We add a little more than ordinary to our meals. The house is set in order. We look and long for his coming, and when he actually comes, we go to the gate to meet him and welcome

him to our home. We entertain him while he is with us and try to make him feel happy. Jesus Christ is a "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Yet many of us are not nearly so much concerned about Him as we are about our earthly friends.

Think of all Jesus does for us. When we are oppressed, He helps us; when sorrow afflicts our souls, we go to Him for comfort; when weary of the trials of life, we approach Him for consolation; when we are discouraged, He renews and encourages us by His divine inspiration; yet how few there are who are really watching and praying for His coming. In His Spirit He is with us all the time, but some day He will again be with us in person. Then what a glorious time it will be for those who had been watching and praying for His coming. But how sad for those who are like the foolish virgins. To them He will come as a thief in the night. Then is the time that there will be weeping and wailing and crying for the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them to hide them from the wrath of God.

Every Christian expects the second coming of Christ. Every Christian knows also that He will come as King and Judge. He also thinks of his own death as ending his life on earth to go to be with Christ. So, if we have an eye open to His light, a hand that carries on His work, a foot that is ever ready to meet Him, and a heart that is

ever open to receive His grace, we may live a truly happy life on earth with the assurance of a life of unspeakable joy beyond this life.

Let us remember that we are Christ's servants. We belong to Him by creation and by redemption; we are subject to Him. He has given us work to do in His absence—work that should engage all our powers and energies. He has left us to ourselves for a season and has given us our choice of work. But when He returns we must expect a day of reckoning. If we are found faithful to Him joy and honor will be ours; if unfaithful, distress and ruin. Our happiness, then, is assured by our living for Christ, by our being prepared for death and judgment at any moment and also for His coming at any moment, and by our helping others to live with the same wakefulness and zeal.

Vigilance is the price of everything good on earth and in heaven. Nothing but unceasing watchfulness can keep our heart in harmony with God's heart.

One dark, stormy night on the North Atlantic, the captain of a vessel climbed the fore-mast and kept a close watch on the sea ahead. The sea was full of icebergs, and as he discovered an iceberg in the course of the ship he shouted his orders to the men below, telling them how to steer the vessel so as to avoid it. All night long he kept up the watch. Upon his vigilance depended the lives of over three

hundred precious souls. He brought them safely through and morning dawned with a clear sky and safer sailing. The icebergs of temptation will destroy the soul if they are not guarded against and avoided. There is little pleasure in watching in and of itself. It is in the results of watchfulness that we find cause to rejoice.

Faculties not employed will soon perish from disuse. Faculties used and cultivated acquire wonderful capacity. Vigilance is one of the faculties which need to be trained to the highest pitch of efficiency before we can enjoy fully a happy, Christian life. He who does not continually watch and pray will often fall into sin and bring sorrow upon himself. If we continue watchful and prayerful, the dangers are foreseen and when temptation does come we can overcome it by the help of God and go on our way rejoicing.

A business man would find no pleasure in his occupation if he were to gain a thousand dollars one year only to lose it all or even more the next. But if he can increase his capital steadily from year to year, if it is only by a few dollars each year, he cannot but enjoy his work. The man who tries to serve Christ a short time and then falls back into sin can find no pleasure in such a life. Even the world looks upon such a man with contempt. But the man who keeps on in Christ's service steadily from year to year, grows in grace and finds his Christianity a constant source of joy.

Watchfulness provides opportunities for the exercise of faith, and tends to draw us nearer and keep us closer to Him by whom alone we stand. If we were saved by a single act from all evil, and we should have no further need for watchfulness, should we not lose much that now makes us feel our dependence on Him who is our constant trust?

Watchfulness is something quite distinct from nervous timidity and morbid apprehensiveness. It is not the condition of a man who sees an enemy in every bush, and is tortured by a thousand alarms and all the misgivings of unbelief. Vigilance makes a man fearless and bold because he feels himself prepared for any condition that may come to him. He is happy because he is in harmony with his surroundings and at peace with his God.

Nor does watchfulness consist in a morbid state of self-inspection and self-accusation. A certain preacher was once aroused by a policeman who told him that the door of his church stood open. He went in the darkness and as soon as he entered the door he caught hold of something which he took for a robber. It was only the floor mop? It is quite possible to convert a church mop into a burglar in our spiritual experience. Vigilance does not consist in a severe affectation of solemnity and a pious aversion of anything like natural cheerfulness. A certain Christian who was much inclined to sombreness had a habit of exclaiming when something amusing occurred, "I am always afraid of losing

communion with God by giving way to levity." While we admire his conscientiousness, we must feel that he confused sombreness with sobriety.

The word watch in our language is used to denote two sets of words in the Greek. One set of terms indicates the necessity of guarding against sleep, and the other set the necessity of guarding against any form of intoxication. Both these ideas are brought out in a single passage in I Thessalonians. "Let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night." Peter exhorts us to be "sober and watch unto prayer." This suggests that watchfulness needs to be first of all exercised with reference to our relations with God. We need also to guard against temptations within as well as against temptations from the outside. We need to learn what our own peculiar temptations are and guard especially against them. We need to be vigilant in the use of our tongue. We need to watch our temper. Only as these things are guarded can we hope to have friends in this world, and these are certainly essential to our happiness.

"Wickedness," says Sir Philip Sindey," is like a bottomless pit, into which it is easier for a man to prevent himself from falling, than having fallen in, to preserve himself from falling infinitely." Let us watch unto prayer.

"I often recall," said an old sailor, "my first

night at sea. A storm had come up, and we had put back under a point of land, which broke the wind a little, but still the wind had a rake on us and we were in danger of drifting. I was on the anchor watch and it was my duty to give warning in case the ship should drag her anchor. It was a long night for me. I was very anxious whether I should really know if the ship did drift. How could I tell? I found that by going forward and placing my hand on the chain I could tell by the feeling of it whether the anchor was dragging or not. How often that night I went forward and placed my hand upon that chain! And very often since I have wondered whether I am drifting away from God, and then I go away and pray. Sometimes during that long stormy night I would be startled by a rumbling sound, and I would put my hand on the chain, and find it was not the anchor dragging, but only the chain grating against the rocks at the bottom. The anchor was still firm. And sometimes now, in temptation and trial, I become afraid, and upon praying I find that away down deep in my heart I do love God, and my hope is in His salvation. And I want to just say a word to my fellow-Christians: "Keep an anchor watch, lest before you are aware you may be upon the rocks."—Anon.

We are commanded to watch for Christ's second coming. The parable in Mark 13:34 cannot be interpreted to refer only to the ordinary risks of human mortality. Its theme is not man's dying but

Christ's coming. It is not fair to look upon Christ as a mere absentee lord of the soil. For He made this world, He suffered wonderfully that we might be saved, and He owns what He has purchased. He went away for a most gracious purpose. He would send the Comforter (John 16:7). He has gone to prepare a place for those whom He died to redeem (John 14:2, 3). There is a fitness in the passionate words of Richard Baxter:—"Haste, O my Savior, the time of thy return: send forth thy angels, let the last trumpet sound! Delay not, lest the living give up hope. Oh, hasten that great resurrection day when the seed thou sowest corruptible shall come forth incorruptible, and the graves that retain but dust shall return their glorious ones, thy destined bride!"

God has given each of us a work to do. There is plenty of room to develop all our talents, and the most sacred command given is to watch unto prayer, until the second coming of Christ and be ready to receive Him as our Lord forever.

CHAPTER IV

HOPE

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God" (Psa. 146:5). "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish" (Prov. 10:28).

Hope, in a general way, is a desire for some good with an expectation of obtaining it. The well-founded hope of the true Christian is a source of much happiness in his life on earth.

From the passages of scripture quoted above we learn that the hope that is in the true believer brings happiness to him regardless of the dark days that come to saint and sinner alike. But there is a difference between the way dark times effect the two. The Christian has the hope of a brighter future and so can look to God for comfort in the dark, gloomy days and be happy in all his troubles, while the sinner in his sinful state can only look upon the master he is serving with still more gloom in prospect.

When we leave home or go away from our friends, we often shed tears as we separate with an expression of hope that we may soon meet again.

It would be sad indeed if we were to bid parent or brother or sister or other dear ones farewell without any hope of ever meeting again. The consoling power in man's soul is hope. Our loved ones are called one by one to their long home and our souls are stricken with grief, yet when they have lived the Christ-like life and we know that Christ has taken them to Himself, we have consolation in the hope that we may again meet those gone before in a much brighter and happier place than this world.

But "When a wicked man dieth his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth" (Prov. 11:7). The sinner is entirely without hope in this life. If his Christian friend dies and passes into the glory world, he may hope to meet that friend again sometime. But, unless he seeks the new life now, through the atoning blood of Christ, his hope will perish like that of "unjust men" spoken of by the wise man.

The happiness of the thief is in the hope of securing treasure. The drunkard's joy is in the hope of having a draught of liquid destruction. The defrauder finds joy in the hope of cheating some new victim. But all their expectations end in disappointment. The sinner looks forward and tries to drown the remorse of his conscience by the hope of future success. The Christian has no remorse of conscience to drown, but has the consciousness that he is complying with the will and the teaching of Christ and his hope is ever bright.

A life of service and devotion to Christ and for the welfare of the human family is, without any doubt, the highest state of happiness for living man. Such a life brings with itself a hope that is clear and without fear. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life" (Prov. 13:12).

And there are false hopes. The ship of self-righteousness is sailing through the world and many are the passengers that expect to sail to heaven in her. But the time will come when that hope will be taken away. That ship never carried a passenger to heaven and never will. This ship takes her own course, no matter what the advice may be that is given by the great Master Pilot. It is a good thing when a terrible tempest comes and wrecks the old ship and blasts the hopes of the occupants. It is surprising to see how many people will hold on to self-righteousness. Losing hope in works alone, they seek refuge under the protection of some church and try to get its ceremonies to help them out. When they see that ceremonies also will fail them in the day of judgment they are more hopeless than ever. Clinging to the wrecks of their own righteousness they try to make them serve as a means of salvation. But there is no salvation and no hope of happiness in any other way save the blood which made an atonement for sin. The ship of the righteousness of God is the blessed hope which brings comfort to the distressed soul.

"And rejoice in hope of the glory of God," says the apostle. The hope of the glory of God is surely a source of happiness. Glory means something splendid, dazzling, overwhelming. The term is sometimes wrongly applied to things low and unworthy, but it is always rightly used when applied to the things pertaining to God. The most splendid of man's accomplishments is vile in comparison with the lowest and most insignificant of God's creative works.

We see God's glory exhibited in all nature about us. We see the lily of the field, only a little flower, and yet Jesus declares that "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." What splendors the heavens exhibit! The glory of God means Himself. Moses prayed, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." In other words, "reveal thyself more fully to me." No man can see God personally and live. Were we physically capable of seeing Him, we could not endure the vision. But when we lay aside all that is mortal and put on immortality, then "we shall see him as he is." If the works of God are so glorious, what must He Himself be! What a happy life for the Christian in this blessed hope!

God provides for us according to our necessities, and He holds us accountable to Himself. He sees and knows our hearts and lives. When we wander away from Him He reconciles us to Him-

self through Christ, and gives mercy and grace to all who ask them at His hands. Above the perfect purity that awaits the godly in heaven is that crowning work—God's glory. The glories of Eden, of Sinai, of Zion, of Tabor, are nothing compared with the glory of heaven. No sin, no sickness, no sorrow, no want, no trouble, no pain, no anguish of soul can ever enter there; but we shall enjoy the society of the purest and most glorious of beings. Peter thought it was good to be present when Moses, Elias, and Jesus were conversing. How much more glorious must the intimacies of heaven be!

The employments of heaven will be glorious. They will constantly grow in interest and in the joy they afford. The joys which the hope of the glory of God promise to us shall in heaven be ours by full possession. They shall be ours just as the land of Canaan belonged to the descendants of the patriarchs by actual possession. They are secured to us by the covenant made by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. And even now in this life we have a hope—"a good hope through grace." "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

Many a soul would drift away from God if this hope were taken away. But the hope of the glory of God even in this life gives a shadow of the glory that is to be revealed in the world to come.

The hope of seeing God's glory in its fullness should be an inspiration to any soul to press onward with joy even through the trials and sorrows of the life that now is, in full assurance of the deliverance to come.

Our time here will not be long. We are journeying to a beautiful land of rest. Why should we falter so near the end of the journey? Shall the valley of death affright us, when we can look beyond it and see the fields of immortality smiling at us as if by the approach of spring? Destined as we are for heaven, shall we grieve or murmur that earth has no resting place for the soul, or that God prevents every tendency to such rest here by sharp afflictions or disappointments? No, indeed! Heaven seen at a distance should call us onward and its glorious light should shine clearly on the darkest paths of life. The hope of heaven should not only prevent us from complaining of the afflictions but should be recognized as a means of discipline to promote progress toward our eternal hope. Afflictions should be recognized as a means of cleansing out the dross and of purging us from sin, fitting us for the Master's use, and teaching us earnestly to pray that we may be blessed for our presence in God's glory with exceeding joy.

How sad this world must be to those who have no hope in Jesus, no Savior, no refuge in trouble. When the dark days of life come, as they do come to all, how much sadder it is for those who have no

hope in the life beyond than for those whose trust is in God for all eternity. This sadness will only have its consummation in the fiery pit of hell. Oh, why not renounce the life of sin and take on the better life in which we can entertain thoughts of happiness and the hope of ever increasing joy throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity?

The apostle Peter tells us to "hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Like all other Christian virtues, hope must be developed if the Christian wishes to attain the happiness that God intends us to have. Hope is a power in the molding of character. It, to a large extent, makes the difference between man and beasts. Take away hope and man can no longer make advancement in any way. Because of the importance of this grace in the attainment of true happiness, God in His Word places great stress upon it.

Hope is an attribute of the soul. "Thou didst make me to hope when I was upon my mother's breasts." It implies the existence of good to come and the possibility of coming into its possession. It is one of the strongest forces of our nature. The real worth of this attribute to man depends upon the direction it takes. "Wrongly directed it is a fawning traitor to the mind." The goodly scenes it spreads out to the soul may turn out to be a mere mirage. False hopes are like meteors which brighten the skies for a moment, only to leave the gloom

more intense. They are mere blossoms of fruitless trees, pleasing to the eye for the hour, then fading away and rotting in the dust. They are like the fig tree seen by Christ and His disciples in the distance. They had hoped that they might find figs to eat but were disappointed. False hope seems to be pleasing and bright, but at the end it fades away like the leaves in the fall and nothing is left but the bare trunk and branches of the natural life.

But the hope of the righteous does not fade away. When attained, it will not only have the beauty of leaves but will have flowers and fruit as well. Longfellow compares false hope to the setting of the sun. Solomon speaks of it as the giving up of the ghost. Rightly directed hope is among the chief of our blessings. It is that which gives sunshine to the sky, beauty to the landscape, and music to the soul. Such is the hope of which the apostle speaks, "Rejoicing in hope" (Rom. 12: 12). There is joy in the hope of the righteous. Our chief joy on earth is the hope of a better future. Two things are essential to a joyous hope: (1) A right object. Hope must not be selfish. The hope which is directed to one's own happiness never satisfies. We have a feeling that we must live for something greater and nobler than self. (2) It must be lasting. Man can never be fully happy while his hope is directed to the transient and the dying. But the Bible gives surety for a hope of eternal life in heaven to the true followers of Christ.

The Gospel gives assurance that the guilty and depraved soul can be brought into the possession of true goodness and restored to the very image of God. History abounds with examples of bad men who became good. So the lives of saintly men is another reason for clinging to a real hope. Above all there is the inward consciousness of moral progress. The man who has within him the hope of the glory of God is conscious that he has made progress and that the steps he has taken are aids and pledges of future success.

In the Scriptures we read of three kinds of hope:—(1) The hope that is in us. (2) The hope that is laid up for us, and (3) The hope that is set before us. The happiness of heaven—heaven itself—its light and glory, its songs and its blessedness—this is the hope that is laid up for us. That good work of the Holy Spirit's operation on the heart here and now, whereby we look for the hope laid up for us, and for the earnest of it, is the hope that is in us. And Jesus Christ Himself, the only foundation and hope for sinners or for saints, for pardon or for holiness, is the hope set before us.

The hope in us that we have the power and the privilege of fleeing from the wrath of sin consoles us. We may flee, like the man-slayer of old, to the city of refuge before the avenger of blood overtakes us. So a man, struck with conviction of guilt and despair finds refuge by trusting in Christ. The very name of Jesus, which was so dull and lifeless to him,

now sounds like music. His soul leaps within him to know that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses. What a joy to him to know that "It is a faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Knowing his guilt and being convicted of sin, he is no longer satisfied with a merely general presentation of the matter. It is not enough for him to know that God is merciful and that Christ is the Savior of mankind. He now carefully examines the whole subject—the authority and commission of Christ to save. His ability and qualifications to save, His willingness and readiness to save, and whether the plan of salvation is for him as an individual.

Often the hindrance in the way of sinners on the way of salvation is their unwillingness to surrender all. A man walking through a field fell into a dry well. His cries for help were heard by a neighbor who came with a rope to help him out. The man below laid hold of the rope but was unable to retain his grasp. The rope slipped through his hands. Alarmed and in great concern the man above asked what was the matter and whether there was not something in the hands of the man in the well. "Yes," said the man below, "I have with me a few valuable parcels which I would like to bring up with me." "I can't save you," said the man at the top, "unless you are willing to forsake all. Your strength is too far gone to hold anything but your

own weight." Realizing the force of what he heard, the desperate man dropped his load and was drawn safely to the surface.

Are you seeking purity of heart and still finding yourself day after day in the horrible pit of defilement? The golden chain of salvation is lowered to you from above. Is there not something in your hands? How about the parcels so precious to the flesh? Have you dropped them all? Then lay hold on the hope that is set before you, and keep hold of it until your feet are on the rock and your goings from henceforth shall be established on the highway of holiness. Is there any one parcel that you feel too precious to drop? Well, say then, "I will not give up the idol," and no longer dishonor God by saying, "I cannot believe."

"The Christian's hope is upon that which is within the vail." Yes, it is attracted by that which is afterward to be revealed by the fullness of grace which is to come to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ the "far more and exceeding weight of glory" which eye has not seen but which will burst upon our enraptured souls when we awake in the divine likeness at the resurrection morn. Oh, what sublime anticipation! The perfection of the soul in happiness, which in this world is so limited and interrupted,—the perfection of the soul in purity, which is now only attained in part because the flesh lusteth against the spirit and we cannot do the things we would,—the perfection of the soul in

knowledge, which is here so contracted, intercepted, acquired with so much difficulty, and so soon forgotten,—the perfection of the soul in holy love, which on earth is so faint, cold, and weak,—the unveiled vision of God and His Son,—intimate and everlasting communion with the great Jehovah. How elevating, how expanding, how purifying, how cheering, how attractive! Compare this hope with the hope of the worldling, whose portion is only in this life, and consists in houses and lands, stocks and bonds, gold and silver, titles and emulations. Compare it with the hope of the sensualist, who fares sumptuously every day and cries, “What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?” while his soul is unfed by the bread of life, untaught by the Holy Spirit. Compare it with the hope of the ambitious, whose great object is to rise in the scale of popularity.

The Word and the covenant of God are the charter of our hopes which we are permitted to plead, saying, “Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.” We may remember that “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” The finished work of Christ is the support and security of our hope. “The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by which we draw nigh unto God.” Our union with the Savior and the renewal of our

soul by the converting grace of the Holy Ghost are evidence and sanction of our hope, as "Christ is in us the hope of glory." By the witnessing of the Spirit "we know what is the hope of our calling" and enjoy "the full assurance of hope unto the end." This hope is like an "anchor to the soul, both sure and stedfast."

On what does the hope of the newly awakened sinner rest? On the free mercy of God, who desirereth not the death of sinners, but rather that a man turn from his wickedness and live. See Ezek. 33:11; II Pet. 3:9. It rests upon the efficiency of the blood of Christ, which is unto all and upon all those who believe, which is the price of our redemption, the purchase of our acceptance, the ratification of our peace, and the balm of our consolation.

The importance of hope can only be realized when we think how imperfectly the things of this world can bestow happiness upon the soul. Upon evangelical hope, the anchor of the soul, lies in a great degree, the peace, the comfort and the happiness of the soul. On the heavenly voyage Christ is the pilot, His holy Word is the chart and compass, and hope is the anchor.

CHAPTER V

FAITH

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,—the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

Seeking an object without attaining it brings disappointment; but when obtaining follows the seeking there will be joy in the quest, provided the object is worth seeking. Faith is the ground of hope. It is hope realized, hope finished, hope attained. As a foundation of the Christian's joy it stands at the very entrance to the Christian life.

Faith is the essential element in every phase of the transition from a life of sin to the consummation of a life of holiness in the celestial mansions above. Through faith we receive remission of sins, justification, sanctification, redemption, adoption, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Faith produces hope, joy, peace, confidence, and boldness in whatever we attempt in the service of Christ.

We are pilgrims on earth, traveling onward, facing eternity. Every soul on earth is destined to reach one of two places. Which shall it be in our case? By His wondrous power God can land us at the gateway of eternal bliss; by our own choice we may be doomed to perdition. Faith in God is

our only hope of salvation. There are many things in this life that we cannot understand, but if we have faith in God He will pilot us safely through every time and place of danger.

As I left the train the other night I thought of the great faith we, as passengers, have in the man at the throttle. Into the darkness we had plunged, not knowing where we were or in what direction we were going. We knew that the railway led to our destination and we supposed that the train was on the right track. But from what we could find out of ourselves we knew nothing positively. Faith in the one man, however, took away all fear and we enjoyed ourselves as the train sped forward and finally landed us at the end of our journey. Guided by our own personal knowledge alone, in a natural sense, not one of us could know whether we are on the way to heaven or not. But we know that Christ has pointed us the way. He has promised to guide us on the way. Having met His conditions by faith, having faith in the all powerful One who holds our lives in His hands, we cast aside all fear as to the outcome of our journey. As we place our lives confidently in the hands of the man at the throttle, knowing that he has been over the way often before, we may safely place our eternal destinies into the hands of Jesus. He has been over the way before. He knows every place of danger, every signal post along the way.

If we looked to man and man-made creeds for

our hope of salvation we should be sadly at a loss to know which way to take. Even many so-called Christian societies have wandered far from the path laid down by God in His unchanging Word. As each takes his own choice in interpreting God's will, there are widely different ways pointed out as being the way of salvation. But faith in God and His word points to only one way.

A careful passenger is not apt to get on the wrong train. He can get information in various ways from reliable people as to the proper train to take. Neither is there any excuse for a person who does not take the proper way to reach eternal life. Information in regard to the way and the means of reaching heaven is within reach of all who seek it. God's Word is plain and reliable. The Holy Spirit is an unfailing Guide, and all the way Christ's presence goes with those who ask and seek it.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." There are many examples of men of faith recorded in the Bible and of the rewards that are given to those who seek God in faith.

Caleb, the spy sent out by the tribe of Judah to spy out the land of Canaan, with eleven others of other tribes, was a man of faith. Had they looked at outward circumstances alone the ten who advised against an invasion of the land might be considered

to be quite right. It was true that there were giants in the land. They were many more and much mightier than the children of Israel, so recently come out of the state of slavery. But the faith of Caleb knew a power that the cowardly ten did not know of. He counted not on the strength of the arm of flesh but on the power of the living God. And how grandly his faith was rewarded. When the first series of battles in Canaan was fought and won, Caleb came to Joshua and reminded him of how they two had stood together in testifying of the power of God and in claiming God's promise. And he asked permission to take for himself and for his descendants the very stronghold that had so frightened the cowardly ten spies so many years before. And he won his prize.

Abraham as a young man was living, so far as we know, as most young men lived in the vicinity of Ur of the Chaldees. But there came to him a call one day that separated him from his home and his former associates. It was the call of the living God. We hear nothing of persecution that drove him away, or of discontent with his work or with the country he was living in. But when that call came to get up out of the land of his fathers and from his father's house and family, Abraham obeyed the voice of God and went. He did not know where he was going. He knew only that the voice which called him would show him the land to which he was going. He had faith in Him who spoke to him, trusted Him implicitly and that faith stood by him

through a long life and gave him joy in trial, in sorrow, in conflict, and in difficulty. The test of Abraham's faith was long and severe. There were the long years of waiting—just waiting. At long intervals God spoke to him and in the mean time Abraham believed God and simply waited.

Abraham's life was not one of unconcern. He had many things that required all his thought, strength, and energy. When the warring kings came and took away his kinsman as a captive, he armed his household servants and brought back the captive safe and sound. But he was not fighting in his own strength and not for his own gain. On his return he gave to the priest of the Most High God a tenth of the spoil he had taken, thus recognizing Him as the giver of the victory.

When the supreme test of his life came, and he was ordered to offer up his only son, he stood the test through the strength of Him in whom he had implicit faith. Abraham knew that God had promised to Isaac the line of descent that should number as the sands of the sea shore for multitude. Could the dead be the father of such a multitude? Abraham did not know how it was going to be brought about, but he knew that the voice he had obeyed when he left his father's house was the same voice that had bidden him offer up his son and he knew no other way but to obey. He believed that God had power to raise his son from the dead to fulfill His promise. He did not know the reason for the

strange command of God. He simply believed Him and God recognized a faith that would not falter at the severest trial—and Abraham was called the friend of God.

Sweet fellowship. God took Abraham into consultation in the weighty matters concerning a wicked and rebellious city. And God heard Abraham's petition for the doomed place and saved Lot for His friend's sake. And the reward of the father of the Faithful was given to Abraham in this life, and to be in the presence of God forever in the life to come.

Moses was a man of faith. Though adopted as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he was taught by his parents the way of the true God. What a grand school that was for him, his father's family, his mother as his nurse, the children of his people as his playmates and companions. When he was grown he was brought to the court and was taught in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Then later came a time when Moses had to make a decision. He might have been a great man in Egypt—perhaps another Joseph—perhaps even a greater than Joseph, so far as human authority was concerned. But he looked upon the affliction of his people, he remembered what he had been taught at his mother's knee about the great and only true God, and he made the decision on the strength of the faith he had in that God.

From what we read of Moses in the New Testament we know that he weighed the matter well

before deciding. On the one hand was an earthly crown, riches and honor, power of a nation, ease and luxury and splendor. On the other hand was reproach to be shared with a nation of slaves, hardship, possible bondage, but fellowship with God and faith in the reward of the faithful in the life to come.

And when his choice was made there came tests of his faith which would have defeated a weaker man. First he attempted to deliver his people from their hard lot by force—then he fled for his life. And for forty long years he waited. Did you ever have to wait? How long it seems. Have you ever had to wait for a train with no one to talk to, no book to read, no letters to write? Hours seemed like weeks at other times. But here was Moses waiting in the wilderness for forty years, tending sheep. He who might have been in the king's palace lived the life of a lonely shepherd. Had God forgotten? Was the day of deliverance never to come? Moses' faith failed not. There came a time when the voice that had called Abraham spoke to Moses too. Moses recognized the voice. At the age of eighty years, a time when most men are ready to lay down the burdens of an active life, Moses went back at the command of God, to the land from which he had been a fugitive, to begin his real life's work.

For forty more years Moses lived a faithful servant of the God in whom he trusted. Then it

became evident for what purpose God had given him those long years of training and those severe tests of faith. The trials in Egypt, the trials as a shepherd, were light and easy compared with the difficulties he had to encounter as leader of God's chosen but rebellious people out of Egypt into Canaan. Nothing but his unflinching faith in God could have carried him through them. True, he was denied the joy of entering into the promised land; but his eyes beheld the land to the borders of which he had led God's chosen people. There were times when Moses stood between the wrath of God and the rebellious people and when he had plead for mercy upon them. As his eyes were directed toward the land flowing with milk and honey, could he not rejoice because his faith had triumphed and the people he had led, had shielded, had prayed for, had taught, had disciplined, were at last to enter the land of rest?

Daniel, though a captive, stood faithful in the religion of his God. The king's decree required him to make a decision that would have been a fearful trial to many a person. It may have caused Daniel some thought. But he never hesitated as to the right course to pursue. When he knew that the writing had been signed that was to entrap him, he went as was his custom, and three times a day opened his window toward Jerusalem and prayed as he had ever done. What was to be the outcome? That never seems to have entered his mind. The important

question to his mind was, What is the right thing to do? Having decided that, there was only one course for Daniel to follow. He probably did not know how or by what means God was going to show His power and justify His servant in the eyes of the idolators. But he trusted God that it would be all right. And God richly rewarded his faith. His name is included in the list of three righteous men in God's holy Word (Ezek. 14:14).

Faith is the crowning element of the Christian life. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." It is compared in Scripture to a shield and a breastplate, protecting us against the attacks of the enemy. It is the one and only way by which we can attain salvation. To the sinful woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head, Jesus spoke words of commendation for her faith. Of the Gentile father who asked for the healing of his child, Jesus spoke as He could not speak of the Israelites because he had faith.

True, whole-hearted faith, a complete surrender of our will and all we have and are to God, brings the believer into a state of happiness. It cannot be otherwise. The elements that go to make up a happy condition of the mind and soul are associated with faith. Our cares are entrusted to Him whose we are and whom we serve. Our trials and temptations are met in His strength. The affairs that vex

(and mar our enjoyment of life are committed to His all-embracing control.

T r u s t i n g H i m b r i n g s , a s a n a t u r a l c o n s e q u e n c e , l o v e f o r H i m w h o d o e s s o m u c h f o r u s . W e l o v e H i m a n d c a n n o t b u t w a n t t o d o e v e r y t h i n g H e w i s h e s u s t o d o . H i s c o m m a n d m e n t s w i l l n o t b e g r i e v o u s t o u s . W e w i l l c h e e r f u l l y a n d g l a d l y w a s h o n e a n o t h e r ' s f e e t , f o r H e h a s g i v e n u s a n e x a m p l e a n d a c o m m a n d s o t o d o . W e w i l l o b s e r v e e v e r y p r e c e p t o f H i s W o r d , f o r n o m a t t e r h o w h u m i l i a t i n g i t m a y s e e m t o p e o p l e o f t h e w o r l d , w e s h a l l f e e l i t a n h o n o r t o b e p e r m i t t e d t o s u f f e r r e p r o a c h f o r t h e s a k e o f o n e w e l o v e a n d t r u s t a s w e d o o u r L o r d J e s u s .

CHAPTER VI

LOVE

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:37,39).

In this passage of Scripture we have the great law of love stated. The statement is brief, yet it is complete. Jesus says that "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Happiness can be attained only when the heart is in harmony with the Creator. And harmony with Him can exist only when we love and obey Him. Happiness conditioned on our relation with our fellow men can be attained only when we are in harmony with them, at peace with them, love them.

In hatred, no matter what the object of the hatred may be, there can be no true pleasure. The carnal mind is at enmity with God always (Rom. 8:7) and frequently with men. Nevertheless, whether it is pleasant or otherwise, nothing should interfere with the Christian's hatred of sin (Rom. 12:9).

A life of love will draw us closer to God and to our brethren. Love to Christ is manifested by

seeking Him, obeying Him, ministering to Him, preferring Him to all others, taking up the cross for Him daily. As a result our love to Him will be that a new meaning will be given to the love God has for us and that we shall have communion with Him.

There is a passage in First John which says, "We love Him because He first loved us." "Him" is omitted in the Revised Version and this omission adds a world of meaning to the text. We love, not only God, but those whom He loves—the whole world of His creation. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

It is an easy matter to love those who love us and do us favors. But God loves those who do not love Him and who are at enmity against Him. And what a debt of love we owe to God for all He has done for us! Yet how little the unthinking world realizes this. The most hardened sinner would not think of mistreating any of his friends who loved him. Yet he is doing everything possible against the One who has done and is doing more for him than all humanity can do.

A sailor out on the ocean became disturbed in his mind in regard to the welfare of his soul. He could not rest day nor night. One day, going to his cabin and locking the door, by the dim light of the candle he opened his Bible and read John 3:16. Something in the verse took hold of him. He read

it again and it seemed like food to his soul. At the third reading he paused at the word "whosoever" and exclaimed with joy, "That means everybody, anybody, it means me!" He had found the keynote of salvation and upon his knees he found forgiveness for his sins and peace to his bewildered soul. He came out a new man, no longer disturbed in mind but happy and contented.

Malice in the heart always leads to sorrow, but a life of love to joy and happiness. Love to God finds joy in its fulfilling. There is a kind of love that does not bring joy. Love for the world and worldly things leads only to sorrow and unhappiness. "The love of money is the root of all evil."

Even in the experience of the true Christian it is possible for love to decline at times. But when love between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters begins to wane, happiness departs with it. When anything comes between us and a perfect love to God our peace and happiness are marred and to some extent destroyed. "If ye love me, keep my commandments," says the Savior. He does not enjoin keeping of one or a part of His commandments, but all of them. He who is disobedient in any one of Christ's commandments is guilty of all, and his union with Christ and his consequent happiness is thus destroyed. He can have no happiness in this life, much less in the life to come.

It is natural for man to love. The instinct is

seen in quite young children. It is highly important, then, that this instinct be carefully watched and that it be guided in the proper direction in early childhood, that the early budding love be turned toward worthy objects and that it be kept from forming attachments for the world and worldly things.

"Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

The martyrs laid down their lives gladly for the sake of the Master and their love for Him. It was hard for the flesh, no doubt, but when they remembered how much the One they loved had done for them, and because of His great love for them they suffered gladly for His name's sake. A loyal soldier does not shrink from the approach of battle but counts it a glory to place his life at the disposal of the country he loves and serves. The true Christian soldier has the same attitude toward his Master. Should his service of the Master lead him into danger of his very life, he will but rejoice; for he knows that if he lose his life for the sake of Christ, he has but found life eternal and the crown of the martyr in the world beyond. The love he has for his Captain leads him to forget his own life in his desire to serve Him. No danger can make him afraid. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (I John 4:18).

Love to our fellow men is the most efficient

means of attaining happiness. There can be no pleasure in hatred toward mankind. It only brings us out of touch with those who may some time be the means of doing us much good and bringing us much joy. Their company might cheer us on our way and a great many blessings might come to us from their hands. We cannot find true happiness in the life of the recluse. In contact with our fellow mortals, doing them good, helping them in their trials, cheering them in their disappointments, in such occupations as these we find our greatest joy as Christians. "If a man says, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen" (I John 4:20).

When we love God and our fellow men from the heart, then it is that we enjoy life as we ought. While in sin we go groping through life as though we were in the dark. How many a Christian can testify of the joy there is in new-found salvation. Even nature seems brighter and more loving and cheerful. This joy lasts not only for a brief day but shall go on increasing until it reaches its fullness in the life above.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9). Wonderful words for the encouragement of the Christian. The finest pictures art ever produced are but a faint shadow compared with the reality of God's creation in earth. And the finest of God's

created nature in earth is yet a fainter shadow compared with what He will show to His people. The sweetest music mankind has ever produced is nothing in comparison with the music and singing in heaven. The imagination of the heart and the allusions to the splendor of heaven and what is done there are vague in comparison with what God shall actually reveal when we see them in all their beauty. "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face."

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). This reveals the secret of happiness as well as of unhappiness. Too many are trying to love two things—to serve two masters—the living God and the god of this world, both at the same time.

A beautiful example of love is that of Ruth toward Naomi. It meant much to Ruth to leave all she had been associated with from her childhood—home, relatives, religion, and the familiar scenes of her youth; but she loved Naomi, and her love made her willing to go with her to a land of strangers. Orpah also loved Naomi, but she loved her friends and her idols and her heathen country more. So, after going with her for a short distance, she left her and went back to her country and to her gods. As we look back at that time and know the consequences, we see the wisdom of Ruth's choice. Having become the wife of Boaz, she became the great-grandmother of David, and through his lineage came Jesus the Savior.

"God is love." Satan is the opposite. In every way you permit Him to, God will add to your happiness. Satan can only add to your sorrow. When Jesus comes to earth again He will invite all those who love Him to a great feast prepared by Himself, and the Lord Himself will serve His guests. What a joy it will be after we have served Him a little while here below to be His guests forever!

Inasmuch as we are sinners by nature we are also enemies of God. "If it be the act of an enemy to slight, resist, renounce the lawful authority of our lawful sovereign; if it be the act of an enemy to range ourselves under the banner of a potentate in open hostility to our own; we, who 'by nature are the children of disobedience,' in subjection to the powers of darkness, 'alienated from the life of God?' and the ministers and slaves of sin, we are, by a natural inference, the natural enemies of God. Being by nature such enemies of God, it appears almost incredible that there is anything in us that merits the affectionate love of God toward us. On the contrary there was in us, indeed, that which well deserves the wrath of God, and might well have left us exposed to the severity of His displeasure."

The contemplation of the wonderful love of God towards us should warm and expand our hearts with a love toward Him in return so that we should be willing and determined to obey Him. The contemplation of the love of God seen in the sending of His only Son into the world should create within us

a devout confidence in Him. We are sure that He will confer upon us through His grace the greatest blessings it is possible for mankind to receive. From the love of God shown to man in the work of salvation we know that He will not leave His work imperfect, but that if we love Him and keep His commandments, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

That God loves apostate man is the grand doctrine of the Bible. Nowhere else can we learn this truth. From the book of nature, written long before the fall of man, we know that God loves mankind, but this tells us nothing of God's love to man as a sinner. But the Bible declares in many different ways that, though man is a sinner, God still loves him.

Unsullied by sin, man has a natural affection for his own species. In spite of the ravages of sin, shown in deeds of great oppression and cruelty, there is still a spring of kindness in the human heart. The tendency to sin works in opposition to the instinct of love. Were it not for sin all the races of mankind would be united in the bonds of a loving brotherhood. This loving instinct is recognized, appealed to, and strengthened by Jesus Christ and the religion He has established.

So strong is the natural love of mankind that many examples are known of persons giving their lives to save their friends and loved ones. At the time when transfusion of blood was more generally practiced than now, so the story is told, a certain

king was about to die. In his kingdom there was a young soldier who was very much attached to the king. Hearing of the danger of his king the man went to the palace and offered his blood and with it his life to save the life of the ruler. Such love calls forth expressions of admiration from all who hear of it. Jesus Christ gave His life blood on the cross for our lives, and so purchased, not only our life here but our life in bliss eternal.

In one of the famines of India a father, mother, and four sons were wandering from place to place seeking food. At last it was decided that, in order to save their lives they would sell one of the children to obtain food for the others. Then they began to consult as to which one to give. Not the eldest, for he was the firstborn and they could not spare him. Then the second son was considered. But the mother saw in him all the features of the father and could not give her consent to his going. And the father saw in the third son the reproduction of the mother's features and refused to part with him. And neither would consider letting the fourth son go for he was their "little Benjamin," their hearts' treasure, and so they decided to keep all and all starve together if need be. And they found joy in the decision to which their love prompted them. Great is the love of a parent. Yet God so loved us that he gave His own Son, His only Son, as a sacrifice that you and I might live.

The happiness of a Christian life cannot be exaggerated. It can not be understood by those

who have not tried it. It cannot be found except by a whole-hearted surrender to the will of Him who has loved us with an infinite love.

Genuine love rejoices in the happiness of its object. In creation, love made the universe in order to diffuse happiness. Christ's mission was for the purpose of making happy the objects of His infinite love. That we may be happy truly and fully we must love, in return for such love the Being who bestowed it.

Love to God makes religious duties light and pleasant. The seven years that Jacob spent in his service to obtain his beloved Rachel seemed but a few days for the love he had toward her. He who loves God will never tire of His service.

A woman is busily engaged in duties which she regards as very important. Her husband is away from home. In the midst of her work she hears his voice and at once she drops everything and goes to meet him. If we love God as we should we will never hesitate to go to meet His slightest wish with our prompt obedience.

Love is the fruitful mother of bright children.
“A multitude of babes around her hung
Playing their sport that joyed her to behold.”

“Her sons are Strength, and Justice and Self-control, and Firmness, and Patience, and many more besides; her daughters are Pity with her sad eyes, and Gentleness with her silvery voice, and Mercy whose sweet face makes sunshine in the face of death, and Humility, all unconscious of her loveli-

ness, and linked hand in hand with these, all the radiant band of sisters whom men call Virtues and Graces. These will dwell in our hearts if 'Love' their mighty mother be there. If we be without her we shall be without them." (Alexander McLaren.)

CHAPTER VII

JOY

"Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit" (Isa. 65:14). God is here speaking to those who were disobedient to Him when He spoke to them through the prophet, and an awful doom He pronounces upon them. But the promises to God's faithful servants are glorious. There is enough of promise in this one verse to make us anxious to serve God with a cheerful and whole-hearted obedience, if there were no other promises of joy in the Bible.

God in His Word continually denounces the joy of the sinner and the hypocrite as only folly but holds up the joy of the righteous as a means of fulfilling His will concerning us. The joy of the Lord is the Christian's strength. Though there are times when the Christian's heart is almost melting with sorrow and his life is turned into mourning, God has promised that our mourning shall be turned into joy. Not only shall our mourning be turned into joy, but also our sorrow (Job 41:22, Jer. 31:13). "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Psa. 126:5). "The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a mo-

ment" (Job 20:5). The joy of the Christian is like gold that has been tried and tested in every way and has stood the test to the end.

When workmen take an interest in their occupation they can go about their work with joy and pleasure. The same is true in Christian work. When Paul started on his journey to Jerusalem he did not know what was to befall him, but his faith was so strong and his love for the Master so great that he believed that his joy would not be complete if he did not do what his spirit urged him to do. He had taught the Gospel in both Asia and Europe in the midst of dangers and temptations, disappointments and trials. He had taught publicly and from house to house, teaching "repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ." The Spirit testified to him in every city that bonds and afflictions awaited him. Yet he says, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). This is the secret of his joy—true joy and lasting.

Joy can come only from a fully consecrated will and life to the service to the Master. If we are truly and faithfully employed in the Master's service, it matters not what will befall us, it will work out to our joy. Paul regarded his Christian service as the crowning joy of his life.

We sometimes look upon temptation as a great affliction. But James says, "My brethren, count it

all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (Jas. 1:2). And it is a great consolation to know that "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13).

The death of Christ inflicted a threefold sorrow on His disciples. In the first place was their own sense of personal loss and bereavement, for they felt that in the death of Christ they had lost their nearest and dearest Friend. Then, they must have had great sympathy for Him in His sufferings. The betrayal, the humiliation, the agony, the crucifixion, went to their hearts. In the third place, they had looked for the establishment of the Messianic kingdom and were overwhelmed by the soreness of the disappointment of their hopes. While their sorrow was threefold, their joy was also threefold. And when the joy came, perhaps it was all the brighter and clearer because of the contrast with the gloom from which these sensitive and sympathetic natures had emerged. It was the joy of a renewed friendship. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." It was the joy of a hope revived. The dark cloud disappeared and the bright sun shone again. Once more they trusted in the redemption of Israel. It was the joy of victory. The Lord had conquered and in triumph there is always joy and gladness. The regenerated race was born in

the resurrection of Christ. The Church of the Redeemer came into existence through His anguish.

The crucifixion of Christ brings a pang of sorrow to our hearts, yet we realize that His death means the lifting of our souls from the degradation of sin to the higher joys of this life, and to the richest joys of the world to come. "Your joy no one taketh from you," He says.

The life of joy is made certain to us by the promise of a faithful Christ. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John 16:20). "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

The desire for happiness is one of the most powerful elements of human nature. It is a principle common to the king's palace and the cottage of the peasant. It *applies* to every circumstance of life, to the farmer, to the merchant, to the mechanic, to the sinner, and to the saint. Yet only he whose life is in harmony with his Creator can attain true happiness. The desire for happiness is lawful and it is beneficial to the soul. Our Creator intended us to be happy. It is this desire which governs our feelings, forms our plans, and directs our pursuits. The glory of an independent God is, in a measure, dependent upon the happiness of His creatures. To promote these, the glory of God and the happiness of man, the commands and the promises were given

and the plan of redemption was executed. Why, then, is there so much misery in the world? Why so much unhappiness? It is because of the influence of sin upon the heart. Sin is the greatest enemy to the welfare of mankind.

Joy does not spring up of its own accord, nor does it come from the objects round about us; it does not come from self-complacency nor from the possession of this world's goods, nor from amusements. The Christian's joy comes from a "reconciliation with God." He regards God as a friend, not as an enemy. He also finds joy in communion with God. The Christian "dwells in the secret place of the Most High," holds delightful fellowship with the Father, and in meditation gets nearer heaven. He participates in the blessedness of God. All these blessings and promises are designed for man's welfare and comfort. He enjoys God in everything, in the beauties of nature, in the bounties of Providence, as well as in his religion. There is joy now in this life, but He has reserved the fulness of joy, of which man has now a foretaste, for the life in heaven.

The medium through which joy is communicated to man is Christ. We communicate with God through Him. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Through Him we receive pardon of sin, all blessings and comforts needed in the enjoyment of this life, power to overcome trials and temptations, and power to prepare for that eternal happiness with Him in the Father's kingdom.

One distinguishing feature of the Christian's joy is that it is lasting. It remains for this life and to all eternity. "The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, the pleasures of sin are but for a season: the triumph of the wicked is short." True joy does not come from the surface, but is deeply rooted in the heart, the real seat of joy. It springs from an inexhaustible yet always overflowing fountain. Often when misfortune is our lot and sorrow befalls us, we have the sympathy of our friends. But they cannot comfort us, grateful though we may be for their words of consolation. God is the refuge, under these circumstances, to whom we may flee.

Joy is a duty enjoined upon the Christian. We are commanded to let our lights shine. Of all the lights, a Christian cannot show a brighter or farther-reaching light than that of joy. It lights up the sinful world in all directions and even searches out remote corners. We should use this light even on our gloomiest days. I have in mind a man who was always joyful, no matter under what circumstances. His joy was well known to all with whom he came in contact. The secret of his happy life was his consecration to the service of the Master. No sinner can enjoy such a peaceful and constant life of joy.

Joy is a sweet and pleasant affection, which eases the mind and comforts the Spirit. It is not a mere fancy; it is a reality that comes from a sense of God's love and favor.

Like the return of springtime after the long

stillness and cold of winter, with all the joy of reanimated nature, so is the joy in the heart of a sinner when the Sun of righteousness shines into it with healing in his wings."

In the year 1708 there was a remarkable day known afterward as "the dark day of New England." On that day the legislature of Connecticut was in session and when the deep darkness came over the land, the whisper was passed around, "The last day has come. It is the day of judgment." Some were in great fear and spoke of adjourning the legislature and going home to prepare for the great ordeal. Abraham Davenport was a godly member of the assembly and when he heard that suggestion he spoke up and said, "It may be that the Lord is coming, and it may be that He is coming today. But if He does come, I want Him to find me at my post of duty serving those who sent me here. I move that we procure candles and proceed with the business of the commonwealth." A heart like that can rejoice under all circumstances

Three hundred years ago a man was burned as a martyr for his faith in the city of Rome. Just before his death he wrote a letter to his friends and dated it, not from a prison cell, but "from a most delightful pleasure garden." In the letter he wrote thus:—"Who will believe that which I now will state? In a dark hole I have found cheerfulness, in a place of bitterness and death, I have found rest and the hope of salvation. Where others weep, I have found laughter, where others fear, I have found

strength. Who will believe me that in a state of misery I have found great pleasure; that in a lonely corner I found glorious company, and in the hardest bonds, perfect repose."—Newton.

Our first step in learning the secrets of a happy life is to pray to God to prepare our heart for the reception of His Word that we may find the joy of that good part which no man can take from us. Some people say that the food they eat does them no good. The fault is not in the food, but in themselves. Their digestive organs are not in proper working order. If Christianity does a person no good the fault is not in the religion, but in the individual. His spiritual digestive apparatus is out of order and he cannot digest spiritual food. The seed of God's Word cannot grow if we allow thorns to grow up and choke it.

Let us be sure that we are in the right way. If our way is not the way of rejoicing we may be sure that it is not the right way.

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10). How the bondman released rejoices in his new-found freedom! And the bondmen of sin have yet more cause to rejoice. Their emancipation is not only for this life but for all eternity. Happiness is not found in wealth, honor, or worldly pleasures. The great preacher in the book of Ecclesiastes declares

all these to be vanity. True joy is found only in doing the will of God.

When we think of the way in which Christ sent forth the seventy mentioned in Luke 10:1, it seems almost incredible that their lives could be happy. To the sinner it seems a dark picture. There were no provisions whatever: no scrip, no money, only the clothing on their backs. There were hardships of all kinds to encounter. Yet, "The seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name" (Luke 10:17). Jesus told them not to rejoice in this but rather because their names were written in heaven.

In our daily life we are happy only to the extent that we make others happy. A selfish person will not even be happy in his own sphere of life. The older son in the parable of the prodigal was sorrowful because he was selfish and refused to help make his younger brother happy. His father and the servants were happy because they had found their loved one again, the one who had been as dead, and tried to make his home coming pleasant. My lost friend, you would not refuse to make another happy if it was in your power to do so. You can make the angels in heaven rejoice, and then share in that joy yourself, by giving yourself to Christ and becoming His faithful servant. Such joy is a rebounding joy. It ascends to heaven and rebounds to him who caused it and fills and thrills his soul. Christ is willing to give all joy to you if you only are willing to accept it.

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come," sings the poet. Well may we rejoice with him at the Savior's advent. Before the foundation of the world it was decreed that after the fall man should not be left without hope of restoration. Immediately the promise of the Messiah was given and fallen man could rejoice in the hope of the coming redemption. Christ certainly was manifested to the world. At first, only in prophecy. Later the manifestation was in actual fact. A choir of angels proclaimed Him, and a star became His herald. To all who did not forcibly close their eyes against it, the manifestation of Christ was as clear and plain as the light of the noonday sun. To the Jews who closed their eyes against Him He brought no joy, but to us who accept Him, he is a constantly increasing joy and happiness.

Paul says, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience" (II Cor. 1:12). To enjoy the testimony of our conscience we must have it in our favor, that we have done what is right from right motives, that we have from the heart as well as externally obeyed God, that we have the approbation of God, and that we stand entitled to all the blessings of eternal life. The Christian with a wakeful conscience lives the happiest life on earth, for his conscience not only approves his right actions but it warns him when he is in danger of going out of the path of right. A morbid conscience is the great source of self-deception in those who refuse Christ.

Baring-Gould tells the following story illustrat-

ing the joy of a guiding light:—“I was many years ago traveling among the Pyrenees. Our carriage had to go over a mountain, by a road which ran for a great part of the way along the edge of a frightful precipice. The rocks descended to a vast depth and the river roared below out of sight. There was no wall or hedge on the side of the road. At the post-house at the bottom of the pass we were given horses and a postman to drive them, and we started. Night fell before we reached our destination, black with heavy clouds, obscuring the stars. The horses were wild, unbroken-in colts, and they plunged from side to side. Whether the driver had been drinking or had lost his head in the excitement I cannot say, but he was perfectly unable to control the horses. They dashed from side to side of the road, and the carriage rocked and the wheels grazed the edge. Every moment we expected one of the horses or the carriage to roll over the edge, when all should have been dashed to pieces. I was then a little boy, and I sat in my mother’s lap.

“My father, not knowing the danger, had walked on from the posthouse, by a short cut over the mountains, to the inn at the top of the pass, where we were to spend the night. My mother prepared for her end. The horses were plunging and racing about so that it was impossible to descend from the carriage. She kissed me and bade me say my prayers, and her lips moved in prayer also. I felt a shudder run through her at each sway of the carriage toward the edge. All at once, above shone

out a bright light. The postman shouted, the horses seemed to become less restive, a strong hand was laid on their reins, the carriage was stopped, and my father's voice was heard. He had arrived at the top of the pass long before us, and, uneasy at the delay, had walked down to meet us. The light we saw was in the window of the posthouse, set as a guide to travelers. I cannot describe to you the relief, the joy, that rose in our hearts when we saw that guiding light and heard that voice. We knew then that we were safe, following the ray of light we should reach our place of rest. Guided by the firm hand on the bits of the untamed horses, we should be safe from danger of being flung down the abyss. Our course through life is like that mountain journey. These wild, undisciplined horses ready to bring us to destruction, are our passions, the driver is conscience, the light is revealed truth and He who meets us and guides us on our way is our heavenly Father."

CHAPTER VIII

OBEDIENCE

Obedience is the performance of the commands of a superior. Perfect obedience in the sense intended in this chapter is the exact conformity of our hearts and lives to the law of God without the least imperfection.

Obedience is one of the sources of true happiness.

We think of two families. In the one the children are obedient to their parents. As soon as they know something to be done they do it willingly without question or objection. In such a family, not only are duties performed, but there are plans for the enjoyment of leisure hours as well. Our heavenly Father makes similar provision for His obedient and loving children. In this family there is a constant air of pleasure.

The other family consists of members who do pretty much as they please without consideration of the others. Each tries to push as much of the burden of the work on the others as he can. Work seems to be a drudgery in this home. And there is little enjoyment of life in such a home. Obedience is lacking to make a cheerful, happy home.

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of

liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:25).

God's perfect law of liberty is only for His obedient children. When our wills are perfectly conformed to His will we have perfect liberty, for nothing can come between us and our desires. To such, God offers and affords a life of abounding happiness. We will be obedient, not because we must obey, but because we wish to do the will of Him who has loved us with an everlasting love.

A deacon of a certain church, who was well to do and had a large farm adjoining the few acres of a poor widow, was entirely indifferent to the needs of the widow. In making his visits to his members, the minister one day came to the lonely hut occupied by the poor widow. He saw that her supply of wood was about exhausted, so he stepped across the fields to call on the deacon and asked him to take a cord of wood to the poor woman's house. The deacon scratched his head a little and then said, "I have plenty of wood in my woods and a good team to haul it, but who is going to pay the bill?" The minister replied, "I will, provided after delivering the wood and doing up your chores and having your supper finished, you read the first three paragraphs of the forty-first Psalms." The deacon said, "That is easily done."

So the deacon delivered the wood and read the Psalm as directed. The next day the minister met the deacon and asked him how much he wanted for

the wood. "Nothing," he replied, "I never knew that the Bible promises such blessings for helping the poor." He had missed many a blessing by not knowing.

Obedience, as to its nature is

1. *Active*; not only avoiding what is prohibited, but performing what is commanded. "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:9, 10).

2. *Personal*. For though Christ has obeyed the law for us as a covenant of works, yet He has not abrogated it as a rule of life. "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man" (Rom. 7:22): "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:31).

3. *Sincere*. "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (I Tim. 1:5).

4. *Affectionate*; springing from love, not from terror. "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (I John 2:5).

5. *Diligent*, as Paul in his life time.

6. *Conspicuous*. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

7. *Universal.* Not one duty, but all, must be performed.

8. *Perpetual;* at all times, places, and occasions.
—C. Buck.

Had the servants at the feast been disobedient to Mary, the mother of Jesus, matters would have been different. "Whosoever he saith unto you, do it," she commands. They obeyed to the very letter and saw the glory of God in His miraculous power.

True obedience requires promptness. Act immediately upon your conviction of right. When conscience has made a decision, do not stop to debate further. By practice, turn your feelings into principles. You felt a conviction as to duty, but you determined to wait and consider and argue the matter and finally the conviction cooled. You allowed the golden moment to pass by unused.

Some years ago a ship was coasting down the Malabar shore of India. Every day the sailors carefully measured the water in the tanks of fresh water which supplied the drinking water for the crew as well as the water for the steam used in the engines. One day they noticed that the water in one of the tanks tasted salty. There was a leak in the ship and there was danger. After that they took the measure of the water, not once a day as before, but every hour until it was discovered that the water came in so slowly that there was no danger that the ship might not reach her port before the water got any headway. Suppose those sailors had been indifferent to the leak in the vessel. Suppose

instead of only a small opening there had been a large one and, before they could give the matter attention the ship had begun to sink!

Many a character has sunk to ruin because the first impression of wrong doing was allowed to pass unheeded and uncorrected. Obey the monitor of conscience that God has placed in your heart to guide your life, lest it leave you to your fate and you lose its guiding influence.

An officer in command of an army orders his soldiers to march or to halt and they obey immediately. We say, What a well-disciplined army. What wonders can be done by an army of men acting in accordance with the wishes of one wise and careful man! So with the army of the Church of God. They can do wonders by simply being obedient to the Leader and Guide. And only as we obey our Leader can we be happy. Only as we do those things in which our conscience does not condemn us can we enjoy peace and joy in fellowship with God.

We have the assurance that when God calls us to a work He will see us safely through it. We see this beautifully illustrated in the lives of a number of Bible characters. With this thought in view, consider the lives of Abraham, of Moses, of Noah, of David, and of Elijah. Each of these was called to a work that no one else could have done. They obeyed the call of God and He stood by them and gave them strength to perform His divine will.

The power of God lies back of it all, both as to the happiness in this life and in eternity, and the

sooner we learn the lesson of prompt and perfect obedience the greater will be our happiness here, the brighter our prospects for happiness in the world to come.

A man is in a boat on a swiftly flowing river. He has two oars in the boat and has strength to use them. Suppose he sits idly in his boat without using the means he has at hand to bring himself to shore, and he will drift on with the current to destruction. If he use only one of his oars he will row in a circle but each time he comes around he will be farther down the stream, and so far as ultimate results are concerned, he might as well not row at all. Let him lay hold of both oars with a will, and he will be able to get safe to shore. On the stream of life each believer has access to two oars, faith and works. Using either alone will bring him only round and round in a circle, always drifting with the current. Using both together brings him to the shores of eternal bliss.

Man is subject to the laws of nature, such as the laws of light and heat, of gravitation, of sleep, eating, and exercise. Ignorance or violation of these laws will cause us to suffer. So in the spiritual life there are laws to be observed. If we fail through willful disobedience or through ignorance to observe these laws we must suffer the consequences just as surely as we do in the natural sense. "Be not deceived: God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

"Real obedience in all things" seems to be a

hard saying, not because it is hard to understand but because it is so plain and simple. "If you should be disobedient to the least of Christ's commands, you would be guilty of all." How hard to our notions is this simple statement because it is so contrary to them. We naturally desire to take life easy, and do as little as possible. But happiness in this life and in the life to come depends upon our conformity to the will of God, no matter how our doing so will suit the carnal desires.

One day Jesus was walking along the way and there was a great crowd of people before Him and behind Him and all about Him. In the crowd in front was a man not so tall as many of them, and this man was very anxious to see the great Prophet of whom he had heard so much. He could not get near Him, so he ran ahead, climbed a tree and waited. The crowd came on. As Jesus came to the tree He paused, looked up and called the man by name. He told him that He was to take dinner with him that very day. The faith and the obedience of Zacchaeus are both in evidence, for he both believed the Lord and made haste and came down. That day was the beginning of the happy life in the household of Zacchaeus.

Knowing God's will is not sufficient. Our Savior says, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." We need not be surprised at the sadness and sorrow of so many professed Christians. We need not examine their lives very closely to discover that they are entirely indifferent to some, or

nearly all of the Savior's commands and they manifest a constant longing after the things of this world. The only reliable standard by which we measure ourselves is the Word of God.

A miner was lost in a mine. In some way or other he had missed his way in the many passages leading in different directions. He had no matches and his little candle was the only means he had of lighting his way to the outer world. Should a drop of water fall upon that candle, or a careless breath be breathed upon it the mine would certainly become his tomb. The sinner is wandering in the deep, dark mine of the sins of this world. He has a light, the light of God's Word. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Should he spurn it, should he reject its every call, he is lost forever. By cherishing it and accepting its guiding rays as his leader he is saved.

A good lesson may be learned from the parable of the Prodigal Son. The elder brother was a good and obedient boy. When he claimed that he had never violated his father's commands, the father did not deny it. But there came a time of testing. When the prodigal returned and there was rejoicing in the house because of his being found safe and sound, the elder son was displeased and "would not go in." His father even went out to him entreating him to come and join in the general rejoicing. Poor boy! His obedience had been only outward, only in form, only legal. He never knew the sweetness of obedience from motives of love, and never ex-

perienced the blessing of grace freely exercised and of mercy freely given. Even so in the kingdom of Christ, He Himself says, the vilest sinners, through repentance and obedience, will find free entrance, while the self-righteous who never felt the need of repentance will find themselves thrust out.

There are many advantages in making an early start in the Christian life, in early yielding obedience to Him who has purchased us with His own blood. Temptations there are in the Christian life, to be sure, but when we have Jesus on our side we have all the power in heaven and in earth to defend us for this power is in His hand. He has pledged His good word to be with us even to the end of the world and He will make good His promises. The person who begins a pious life young will escape many of the snares laid for him by the devil, and will have all the brighter a crown of rejoicing for his long life of obedience to the Master.

CHAPTER IX

ADOPTION

Adoption is the translation of a person out of one family into another. Adoption into God's family is the act of grace by which God takes the children of the wicked one out of the world and makes them the sons and daughters of His spiritual family. Adoption takes us out of a wicked world; out of a far away country, out of darkness, into the Church, into the kingdom of God's dear Son, into the household of faith. It brings us out of sin and degradation into a world of bliss. It changes sinners to saints, causes enemies to be reconciled. It puts away the calamity of man's fall and puts immortality upon him. It changes the abode of the human family.

From the very nature of the world we see that there is nothing in it that is final. We see so much in it that speaks of infancy. The world is only a place of preparation and is itself in a state of preparation. We go about our daily life and work thinking, planning, contemplating about the future. And the divine government, as we see it on earth, is but an illustration of the divine government that is to come. This world is but a training school, where we learn for a little while to fulfill the duties of the great service for which we were created.

Training consists of three things:—*Instruction*, or the imparting of knowledge, and the giving of new ideas; *education*, or the drawing out, directing, and developing the powers of the heart and mind; and *moral discipline*, or the molding of character and the forming of good habits.

God has placed us here to get instruction concerning Himself. We cannot enter heaven without some previous knowledge of it, its conditions, its employments, and the means of reaching it. The child of God finds it a constant source of joy to learn new things about God and heaven. In thus learning new things spiritual the powers of our heart and mind are drawn out and developed. We are educated spiritually. And every good thing in our character is brought out by discipline. Sometimes the word discipline is looked upon as a harsh and severe word. But in the vocabulary of God it is synonymous with love. There cannot be discipline without friction. But one of the greatest human pleasures is a complete victory over self. Self-discipline thus becomes a strong factor in the life of happiness. One of our purposes in this life is to form good habits. The only way to destroy evil habits is to replace them with good ones.

Our training for the kingdom begins when we have been adopted into the family of God. Before we were adopted we were servants. And not even servants of the living God. We were servants—bond slaves of Satan. Wonderful power of God! Changed from slaves of the enemy of our souls into

sons and daughters of the almighty God of the universe. And not only so, but we are made to be joint heirs of the kingdom with Christ the only begotten Son of the living God.

When we are adopted into the family of God we find ourselves in a new kind of discipline. We shall have to learn the discipline of the family in which we now find ourselves. But we shall soon find that the discipline is far more pleasant than it was under our old master of sin. It is more pleasant to work for an earthly father than to work for an earthly master. So we find that our heavenly Father, while His discipline is strict and exact, is loving and kind in all His dealings with us. He deals with us as a loving father deals with his children. There are no commands given from mere love of being obeyed, but every command is given with a view to the highest good of those to whom it is given. Pardon and recognition would be meaningless terms without adoption. Let us, then, seek the good of God's family. We are in it to labor as well as to enjoy it.

When we are adopted into the family of God we make a most wonderful change. It is a change no less than that from death to life, from ignorance to wisdom, from darkness to light. The Holy Spirit is God's great Teacher. He is the Master of the Great training school of God's family, preparing us for the heirship which He vouchsafed to us on the day of our adoption. We need only to prove

ourselves worthy, through His grace and strength, for that imperishable crown.

Who has more right to the riches and wealth of this world than the child of God? Let the child of God erect his machinery, search the mines, cross the ocean, span the yawning gulfs, pierce the hard rocks, assured that he is doing the will of God in securing His wealth. "All things are yours," things present and things to come. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The right use of the things of this world is right and proper for the children of God.

However, better things even than these are in store for His children. We become partakers of the divine Spirit. The nature we acquire when we become the sons of God subjugates the grosser part of our lives. That nature is righteous and we become pure in heart, single in purpose, simple in behavior, just toward all men. That nature is mercy, and we, having obtained the blessing of divine pity, look with compassion on fallen man, and with longing desire, try to win him to the happy home from which he had so long been exiled. That nature is changeless power, and our weakness is strengthened, and an inward energy is granted so as to enable us to overcome our old adversary, the devil, and his manifestation in self.

That new nature, which we have acquired as the sons of God, is wisdom, and by dwelling with God, when troubles and sorrows arise that we cannot understand, we learn in a quiet repose to commit

all into His care who doeth all things well. That nature is a world-embracing and never failing love. He takes away the old patriarchs that He may give them a never failing rest, when their pilgrimage is finished. When He shall open His doors a new vision shall greet us and we shall see God as He is. But even here our rejoicing is that "Now are we the sons of God."

Adoption was effected through the atoning blood of Christ. The urn was broken on Calvary. The water flowed from it and wheresoever it touches shall there be life and wheresoever it touches not there is death. It shall be a well of living water springing up within the soul—springing up unto eternal life.

Adoption wins our confidence in God and takes away all fear. Just as a child clings to its father or mother for consolation when it is taken by some fear, so will we when we are adopted by our heavenly Father. We then learn to trust in Him because we know He will protect us. In sorrow we come to Him for comfort, when we lack wisdom He will grant it to us.

Many are the happy consequences of our being adopted as the sons of God. Through Christ we become heirs of all God possesses and has promised. If we have little in possession we have much in prospect; if we are not rich in enjoyment, we are rich in faith and hope. Believers are heirs of righteousness, heirs of salvation, with angels as ministering spirits. These happy beings have charge

over the people of God and minister to them on their journey to glory. Believers are heirs of the kingdom. God has prepared a kingdom for all who love Him. To this kingdom we are heirs.

When we are adopted into the family of God we have reached the summit of the mountain of truth. In the name "God" center wonders, majesties, mysteries, and loveliness. The Lord begets us in free, rich, and sovereign grace. And the outcome of it all is life—spiritual, heavenly, divine. It is not a polishing of the human spirit, not a giving right direction to its faculties only. The grandeur of the change is implied in such phrases as, being born of God, passing from death to life, a new creature, quickened with Christ from the death of sin, the washing of regeneration, and the new heart, out of which proceed thoughts, affections, principles, desires, hopes, and faith—all new.

It must not be forgotten, however, that a moral life is not acceptable to God unless it is the offspring of the new birth. The sons begotten of God are the first-fruits of His creatures. "The first fruits" ripened by the sun, earth, and air, have the beauty of maturity in their fulness and bloom and were thus an appropriate offering to infinite perfection. In the mode in which they were offered we are taught the duty and the privilege of all living souls to dedicate themselves to God in faith, fear, and joy. There is great dignity and excellency in a righteous man. He is better in heart, has better principles about himself, has better affections, has a

better disposition, and better prospects. He is a son of God, an heir and one with Christ, righteous in Christ, a peculiar treasure to God, a king divinely born, and (oh wonderful!) a partaker of the divine nature by grace and destined to be filled with all the fulness of God.

God's children after adoption do not fear with carnal fear or the fear of a slave, because then His spirit of adoption shall rule over us. The apostle said, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage." If he had kept strictly to the language he would have added, "But ye have received the spirit of liberty," for liberty is the opposite of bondage. But our apostle is not to be hampered by the rigid rules of composition. He has done better than to ascribe to us the spirit of liberty—"Ye have received the spirit of adoption." "If the Son therefore hath made you free, ye shall be free indeed." He said more than this. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage unto fear." Should he not have added, "But ye have received the spirit of liberty by which ye have confidence?" He says a great deal more, "Wherefore we cry Abba, Father." This is the highest form of confidence. The spirit of adoption is the spirit of gratitude. Oh, that ever the Lord should put me among the children!

It is pretty, though sometimes sad, to see the children imitating their parents. The greatest comfort we may enjoy with our kind friends is through their conversation and aid. When we are adopted into God's family our true relationship with His

kingdom will be revealed. We will converse with Him in prayer and ask His guidance in all we may undertake to do. When we stop to think how ungrateful we have been to Him, is it not a wonder that He ever sought us? When we receive something from one of our friends we thank him for it. Ought we not to thank God for granting us that wonderful privilege of being His sons and daughters? And ought we not to show our gratitude to Him by our lives of consecrated obedience?

CHAPTER X

PEACE

In our Savior's last discourse before He suffered, He made a wonderful bequest to His disciples. "Peace I leave with you," He says, "my peace I give unto you." No wonder He said He gave not as the world gives. His peace was a different thing from the peace given by the world. Through the hours of suffering and agony that followed this final talk, His peace remained undisturbed. The traitorous kiss, the howling mob, the blasphemous judgment of high priest and governor, the murderous act of crucifixion, all could not disturb His inner calm and peace. To have that peace would enable the disciples to go joyfully through persecution and trial, through bereavement and affliction. It would enable them to "take joyfully the spoiling of their goods" and the torturing of their bodies.

Can He really mean that such peace as He had is for us who are His followers at the present time? As a factor of a happy life such inner, constant peace certainly is to be highly esteemed. Can we secure it? Yes, just as certainly as we can secure the eternal life He promised to give to all that believe on His name, as certainly as we may secure

the blessing of His presence as we obey His commands.

The words of that last discourse were spoken for three purposes, in accordance with what He Himself says. In John 15:11 He says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full." It did not seem to them a joyful occasion. He in whom they had trusted as a loving companion and friend, to whom they had looked as the coming Messiah and deliverer of Israel, to whom they had looked up as to a king, was about to be taken from them. They failed to understand His references to His resurrection, and the death He spoke of was dark to them and full of nameless terror. But He spoke to them words that were intended to convey to them the joy that He felt in it all.

Then, in the first verse of the sixteenth chapter He says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended." There was danger of their becoming offended, or caused to stumble, because of Him. In the verses following He speaks of the things that would tend in this direction. They should be put out of the synagogues, and even killed, in the name of religion. The temptation to renounce Jesus as the Christ would be great in the midst of such suffering as they were to experience. But He has told them of the deep mysteries of the kingdom, of the joy that should follow a faithful service and witness for Him, of the place prepared for them and yet to be prepared. The recollection of what He

has said about these things will be enough to carry them safely through temptation so that they shall not be offended.

And again in the thirty-third verse of the same chapter He says, "These things have I spoken unto, that in me ye might have peace." Joy, absence of offense, peace. Notice that the peace He promised was to be in Him. Aside from Him there can be no true peace to the soul.

In Rom. 15:13 we read, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Notice the intimate relationship between joy and peace in this and other passages of a similar nature. And it is through believing that the peace comes to the soul. Faith is the avenue by which the saving grace of Christ enters the heart, it is the means of purifying the heart from sin and its consequences, it is the door by which the peace which passes understanding enters the heart.

Isaiah tells of another condition for peace in the heart. In the thirty-second chapter, the seventeenth verse, he says, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace." "Many seek for peace aside from righteousness. They refuse to adjust some wrong in their lives which calls loudly against them. They refuse to let the light of God's Spirit to ransack their past, because they are conscious that to do so will expose them to the inevitable need of confession and restitution; and as they will not submit to the laying of the foundations of peace,

they miss the peace. So far as you know you must be right, before you can have peace.

"Be sure you go to the bottom of disputes and disagreements. There is a right and a wrong to every question. It is always wise to lay the foundation of justice at any cost, assured that peace inevitably will result sooner or later. Honeyed words will not abide; but just deeds are a permanent basis for a happy and lasting reconciliation.

"How blessed that forevermore our peace is secured! The righteous shall never need to leave their peaceful habitation, or to quit their sure dwellings. However it may hail to the downfall of the forest trees, storms shall never drive them from their quiet resting places, since they are founded upon the righteousness as well as the grace of God."—F. B. Meyer.

"Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace," says the wise counsellor to Job. An intimate acquaintance with God will certainly bring about peace within the soul. To know God, to know Him in all His wonderful manifestations, in His works, in His revelation of Himself in His word, in His Holy Spirit, will show us ourselves as we are, will show us our relationship to Him, our relationship to sin which enslaves us, our way of escape from the bondage of sin.

Intimate acquaintance with God brings us to love His law. And the psalmist says, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." It is only natural that they should

have great peace. God's law is unchangeable and nothing that man can do or think will change or modify God's law to accomodate man's convenience or whim. Violation of this law inevitably brings man into trouble and difficulty. To be at variance with God's will is to be in constant distress. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." But those who love the law of the Lord, who love to obey it and walk in its precepts, whose will is at one with the will of God, have perfect liberty and perfect peace. They at no time desire to do things at variance with the will of God and so never have any desire to go beyond the limits of the path God chooses for them. Peace and joy are their daily portion.

Paul says, "To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." This, too, is natural, for "the carnal mind is enmity against God." God is a Spirit. That which seeks after the carnal things of life cannot be in accord with the will of God. But the spiritual mind is in accord with Him and thus peace results. There is peace for the present life and greater peace for the prospect of the life to come.

So it was a priceless treasure that Christ gave as a legacy to the sorrowing disciples. The primitive man had free and intimate conversation with his God. When man committed sin and fell, this relationship was broken, and the intimate communion between man and God became impossible. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" In this

condition Christ found man. Christ had perfect peace with God and when He left His peace to His followers it was a perfect gift He bestowed on them. He restored the intimate relationship between God and man.

The peace of God will sustain us under all the most trying circumstances in life and even in the hour of death. A little girl at the point of death called her father to her bedside. She knew she was dying and, young as she was, she clung to life. The grave seemed so cold and dark to her. "Papa," she said, "Can't you go along with me through the grave? It is so cold and dark." Her father told her through tears that welled up from a broken heart that he could not go until the Lord called him. "Can't dear mamma go with me?" asked the little girl. "No," said the sobbing father, "mamma must wait until Jesus comes to call her." She turned her face away from her father toward the wall and for a few moments her lips moved in childlike prayer. Then she turned her face toward her father again, all aglow with joy. In a weak cheerful voice she said, "Papa, neither you nor mamma need go with me to the grave now. Jesus will go with me. And the grave is not cold nor dark now."

The peace which the world gives is not like that which Christ gives. The peace of easy circumstances, of good health, of position socially, all take themselves wings and fly away. The peace of the world is not lasting.

In Gal. 5:22 Paul speaks of the fruit of the

Spirit: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace" Notice that he does not speak of the fruits of the Spirit, but calls it all one *fruit*. What is the fruit which he calls by so many different names? Love. Joy is love exulting. Peace is love at rest. And every other virtue named in that list is but a manifestation in the heart. If the love of God is supreme in the heart and its consequent love for mankind, there is sure to be peace there, perfect peace.

In the second Thessalonian letter Paul is giving his parting blessing and says, "Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means." He recognized that man-made peace, no matter for what purpose or on what basis, is not to be compared with that peace which the Lord Himself gives. "By all means," seems a strange provision to add to the wish he expresses for their peace. There were persecutions for the Christians in Thessalonica. Would the persecutions work for their peace? Paul hoped so. There were wrong conceptions of Christ's mission and coming again. Would these wrong ideas work for their peace? They gave Paul an opportunity to give some of the most precious truths concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he told the Christians to comfort one another with the hope of His coming. No matter what the circumstances, the true follower of the Lord will recognize in them the sending of God and greater, deeper peace will be His lot because of the circumstances.

Christ is the Giver of peace. Before His wondrous birth, the father of John the Baptist prophesied concerning Him, saying that one of the purposes of His visiting us was "to guide our feet into the way of peace." The song of the angels announcing His actual advent into the world had the wonderful message of love, "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

(Soul peace within, peace with God in the conscience,) will lead to that state which is enjoined in Heb. 12:14. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." The person who has peace in his own heart and peace with God through Jesus Christ, will have peace with all men so far as his feelings toward them are concerned. He cannot compel all men to be at peace with him. In fact, his living a pious life will be a testimony against ungodly people round about him, and will be apt to lead to his persecution. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

And reaching beyond the lives of individuals to the life of nations when all men follow peace with all men, there shall be no more need of the command to learn war no more, for there will be such love in the hearts of all men for their fellow men that peace shall reign over all the world.

Lord, haste that day!

CHAPTER XI

GRACE

Grace is the divine favor toward man—God's love and pardon. Who would not be happy when he has the assurance of God's blessing resting upon him? No matter how lonely and dreary our lives may seem, there is still sweet joy and peace within the heart if we are blessed by God's grace.

Grace on the part of God is at the very foundation of the plan of salvation. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:20, 21). When poison is taken into the body an antidote is given to remove the bad effects of the poison. When the fiery serpents came among the children of Israel in the wilderness there was death in the bite until God provided the remedy. He did not take away the serpents, but in His wondrous grace He provided a way by which all who were bitten could live, even though they had the deadly taint in their systems. The serpent of brass on the pole was given by God's grace—an emblem of the lifted Son of God, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

It is by grace that we find faith and hope in God. Through grace God plants into our lives a spirit of dependence upon Him and a joyous looking forward to the time when we shall meet Him face to face and see Him as He is. Take faith and hope, the products of grace out of our life and existence on earth becomes a burden. No one need be ignorant of God's grace for He gives the Holy Spirit to enlighten us and show us the good things God has in store for us. He reveals it to us in His Word and interprets His word to us by the Spirit.

The story is told of a poor family who sat down one evening to their scanty meal. It was the last food they had in the house and they had nothing with which to procure food for the next day. It seemed as if they had either to starve or resort to begging. But once more they kneeled down around the family altar and told their need to God. They went to bed not knowing what the morning would bring but trusting that God would in some way provide for them. The next morning found them supplied with food for a number of days to come and more than that, the father was asked to go to work at an honorable occupation that he might earn a living for himself and his family. "My grace is sufficient for thee," was the answer of God to one of His faithful ones who was in distress. It is still sufficient for all who trust Him.

Said the Psalmist, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." In the lives of the

patriarchs how beautifully this is illustrated. It is again verified in the lives of the apostles and of the faithful disciples in all ages. He might permit His faithful prophets and witnesses to be persecuted, He might even permit them to be put to death, but such trials only led them to feel more keenly than ever the presence of the loving Master who had suffered so much for them and even laid down His life for them. Paul in prison could tell of the presence of the Lord speaking to him in the night watches. Joshua, faithful in spite of the opposition of the majority, received his reward in the promised land. The Captain of the Lord of hosts appeared to him to give him courage and strength.

The grace of God changes our entire lives. The desires of our hearts are changed so that sinful habits have no more control over us. We know of a certain young man who for a number of years was addicted to the habit of profane swearing. When he found Christ this habit at once left him and during eleven years of service in the cause of Christ he has not had any temptation to swear. He is extremely sensitive to profane language and has often shuddered at the sound of an oath on the lips of another.

The grace of God will bring about a visible change in the life of an individual. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). There is an outward change as an expression of a change within. The

person who thinks he has an inward change of the heart and does not express it outwardly deceives himself. His religion is vain. If a man cannot see in himself that he is different from what he was before his conversion, he had better fear than hope. Others will see a change also. If our lives are not changed enough that we through our conduct in life can prove to our fellow men that we are adopted children of God we had better see promptly to our soul's condition.

When God bestows upon us the healing of His grace the desire to take advantage of our fellow man is taken entirely away from our hearts. In its place will be a desire to do good to all men in every way we can. The desires of the heart will be entirely reversed from that of a love for indulgence in sin to a life of consecration in the service of the Master.

We see much to admire in a young man of taste and talent even if he is without Christ. He becomes converted to God and his admirable qualities are much more pronounced than before. The grace of God bestowed on him makes his life a blessing to those round about him, and he becomes more and more an object of admiration in the sight of God and man as he grows in grace. The people whom he avoided before now seek him and greet him with love and respect.

Approbation and appreciation do us good if they are received in a meek and lowly spirit. It makes a teacher happy to meet the parents of the

children who attend his school and hear from them words of commendation for his work. It makes the teacher more anxious than ever to do his very best for the good of the school. The same is true of the work of a minister. But how much better it is when we can feel that we have the approval of God on our work and efforts than when we only hear the praise, it may be the flattery, of man.

The change wrought by the grace of God is a thorough one. "All things are become new." There may be a partial reformation while the heart remains unchanged. But if the heart is transformed the reformation is complete. We may reform some of our outward actions, we may quit filthy talk, may quit swearing, may quit drinking, may quit a dozen other things, and the heart may still be as bad in the sight of God as ever. But when the heart, the center of all affections and desires, is changed, all outward things will be changed to conform to it.

A reformation of outward things only will bring no happiness. A certain woman prided herself in her good works in helping the poor and in contributing large sums of money to the cause of Christ. She based her very religion on her good works. But she found no real peace of mind. One night she dreamed that she was walking along the mountain side, when suddenly she stepped out and fell down a high precipice. Half way down she caught hold of a tree which grew out from the face of the cliff. There she hung, and looking into the

abyss below she saw heaps of stones lying hundreds of feet below her. After a time she heard a voice far below her calling to her to let go of the tree and she would be safely caught. She feared to let go and only trembled the more. Again and again the voice called her, "Let go of that limb and I will catch you. As long as you cling to that I cannot save you." At last she took courage and fell—into the arms of Jesus! She awoke and realized that the dream was an emblem of her life. She was trusting in her works and as long as she did so the Lord could not exercise His grace in saving her. She hastened to find the Savior and lived thereafter a life of true service to Him, rejoicing in the happy change wrought in her life by His grace.

The change wrought by grace is of the nature of a substitution, not a superaddition. "But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:20-25).

The change brought about by the grace of God is a permanent one. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in

him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God" (I John 3:9).

Salvation is a gift of God given through His grace. We are saved by grace only. All that we can do of ourselves could not save us. It is not what we can do that we trust in, but what Christ has done for us. A man down a shaft in a mine might work a life-time and not be able to get out by his own effort. But when an elevator is let down the shaft he steps into it and in a few minutes he is safe at the surface. The sinner can no more save himself from the pit of sin. He must rely upon the grace of God, which is the only means of salvation.

A poor woman's only child lay sick. She very much wished that she might secure for him a bunch of grapes—he needed something fresh and good to help his appetite and give him strength. But the only grapes in reach were those in the king's garden. She took a half-crown of her hard-earned money and offered it to the king's gardener for a bunch of ripe grapes. The gardener turned her rudely away. A second time she tried but met the same reception. The king's daughter happened to be in the garden, and seeing the woman in tears, and noticing the earnestness of her expression, called her back. She explained to the woman that the king was not a merchant desiring to sell his produce, but that he was a bestower of gifts. She then with her own hands plucked a large, ripe bunch of grapes and gave it to the woman. The half-

crown, which cost her days of labor could not buy even this small gift. So in God's kingdom. Salvation is free for all, and all the toil and labor and wealth we could accumulate could never secure it. We must receive it as an act of grace from God.

What is man that God is so gracious to us? At best we have never done anything, nor can we do anything to merit His grace. Can we not, then, accept His grace as He offers it freely? The rich and the poor may have it alike, for all must come to the same level and receive it in the same way.

God created all for the enjoyment of man. Only as man disobeyed God did he lose the possession of the beautiful garden in which he was at first placed.

God's grace is manifested not only in His receiving those who come to Him, but in actually seeking out those who do not know Him, and in inviting and calling those who stubbornly stand out in rebellion against Him. "All day long I have stretched forth my hands." God's conduct toward man is kind, earnest, forbearing, and patient. Man's conduct toward God is ungrateful, wicked, obstinate, and insulting. Nothing can be more wonderful. It ought to be that sinful man should stretch forth his hands toward the righteous and holy Creator. But the offended Sovereign beseeches the offending subject; but it is still more wonderful that He should complain of want of success. His whole conduct is but a practical utterance of the pathetic pleading, "How shall I give thee up?"

The starving man stretches forth his hands for food, the criminal for pardon, the oppressed for deliverance, the slave for freedom, the convicted murderer for life. But what does God need of man, and especially of sinners that He stretches forth His hands? Nothing. He is extending His grace to mankind so that they may profit by it.

The mother of an idiot child gave up all society and devoted her life to attending her helpless child. When he was fourteen years old she said to a friend, "For fourteen years I have tended him and loved him and he does not even know me. Oh, it is breaking my heart!" How the Lord might say this of thousands of hearts. He goes from heart to heart knocking for admission. But He is not admitted. Year after year He comes back again and again seeking to make His abode with you. Will you not take Him into your heart? Divine blessings are not given to those who do not desire them. Keep out God's grace, as many of you do, and the end will be destruction.

"Let us come boldly to the throne of grace," is the exhortation of the writer to the Hebrews. He had tried the "throne of grace" and found in it an exquisite pleasure, the purest and sweetest he had ever found. We are exhorted to come boldly, to come at all times, to come with all our petitions, to come freely with our simple words, hopefully, with full confidence that we shall be heard. And the purpose of our coming is given also, "That we may obtain mercy, and grace to help in time of need."

Bowed down by your great weight of guilt you are afraid to lift up your eyes to heaven and think of God. But I bring you glad tidings. There is mercy for you at the throne of grace and I bid you "come." Look up and you will see, where you expected all darkness, a thousand stars of promise cheering you on. Look! There is one, "Come." There is another, "Whosoever." There is still another, "All." See how they come out, just like the evening stars, one after another, brighter and still brighter, all having a message of mercy for you. Will you not receive these messages of love and mercy and be complete in your life?

CHAPTER XII

HEAVEN

Heaven is the only place where we may hope to find perfection. There the most helpless and deformed will be without a blemish. The one who on earth was racked with rheumatic pain will walk the streets of the New Jerusalem with the step of an athlete. The sad at heart will be happy, joyfully praising God for His wondrous mercies.

There will be a gathering from all corners of the world and the only Being who ever on earth enjoyed happiness to perfection will be there to meet and to greet His loved ones from earth. It will be a joy unspeakable to look upon our Creator. Some people think it a great thing to see the President of the United States. To shake hands with him would be a thing to be remembered and talked about for a lifetime. But how infinitely greater than any human being is the great Creator of the universe. And we shall dwell in His presence, and share His joy forever and forever.

We cannot imagine the beauty of heaven. The gates are of pearls and the streets are of gold. There will be no need of the sun there for the Lord God will give them light. It is a place of rest and eternal joy and gladness. The thought of reunion

with the loved ones of earth who have gone before should inspire us to joy even here and now.

The redeemed in heaven are blessed with the loftiest companionship. He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. What will it be to have God, the source of all wisdom, purity, and blessedness, as our constant Companion and Friend! "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him." Paul was writing to the people of Corinth, and that city contained the most beautiful buildings of that day in all the world. The Greeks were noted for their skill in music as well as in art and architecture. Yet, with all their love of the beautiful and their high ideals of what constituted beauty, Paul could say to them that their highest flights of imagination had not reached what God had prepared for them that love Him.

Some of the songs we sing here on earth are sweet and helpful. They seem fresh and new even being used for centuries. But even these will not be suited to the conditions of heaven. The heavenly song is described as "a new song." "They sing," says John, "the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." The song of Moses celebrated the redemption of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. The "new song" will be adapted to our enlarged powers and altered circumstances in heaven. Here on earth we cannot comprehend the whole development of the plan of divine mercy.

The process is still going on, and not until the saved are all brought into heaven will it be completed.

A song is the expression of the heart. When our hearts are sad we refrain from singing. In heaven there is continuous song, for sadness cannot enter there. Goodness is joy, love is freedom. There will be no remains of the conflict with temptation. The spell of sin will be broken forever, and as freedom is one of those things which never grows old, the song of the freedom of heaven will ever be a new song. The happiness of heaven will be far beyond our present comprehension. We can have but the faintest idea of it until we realize it by actual experience.

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is." We shall be like Him in His moral perfections and excellencies. We shall be like Him in purity and holiness and in happiness. There surely must be joy in the thought that when we shall be gathered home we shall be as pure and holy and glorious as the Son of God, our Savior, Guide, and Shepherd. For Jesus promised to give to His disciples the glory which the Father had given Him. Our relation to God and the Lamb, and our conformity to their likeness, will then be open, evident, and apparent. His name will be in their foreheads. We shall be like Him in glory. It is the final result and issue of the eternal wisdom and counsel, project, and purpose of God to give to His people a happiness worthy of Himself. Since

this is so we must believe that it is a happiness beyond all our powers of conception. The depth of this happiness appears from the stupendous means made use of to accomplish it. It is an end brought about by no less means than the incarnation, life, suffering, death, and resurrection of the Son of God. This is the end of all the wishes, endeavors, and expectations of the people of God.

If, upon reflection, you find yourself wholly unsuited to this blessedness, submit yourself at once to God that He may transform you into His likeness. Though our likeness to Him will be perfected only in heaven, yet the likeness must be begun on earth, in this present life. God has promised many blessings of happiness in this life to be perfected in the life to come. The psalmist realized this when, in distrust of his own merit he fled to God for preservation. "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Is it not a beautiful thought that God will show us the path of life? The path of death can be found without showing. It will be found by all who make no effort to seek salvation. He who tries to find the path of life in his own wisdom and strength will be sorely disappointed. How restful, then, to rely upon the infinite power and wisdom of God to direct us in this path of life. He has promised to do so and He will not disappoint us. And more, He has promised to lead us safely in the path, if we put our confiding trust in

Him. "In thy presence there is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Yes, He will grant us joys in various ways here and perfect them in heaven. Here we are often afflicted with the pain of hunger and thirst. The heat of the sun may smite us and we are prostrated by its power. We often fall into divers temptations. All sorts of ailments are our lot in life. But God has promised to remove all these barriers to our happiness and replace them with a land of sunshine, flowers, and splendor of every sort. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:16, 17).

And think of the length of time we shall spend in this happy state. It will be forever. Can you express the idea of "forever" in any other way? When we have enjoyed the pleasures of heaven for ten thousand times ten thousand years, the duration expressed by "forever" will have only begun. Wondrous indeed is the thought of the provision God has made for the happiness of those who love and trust Him.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3). The righteous shall be a true representation of the brightness and greatness of the

most perfect illuminating bodies of God's creation. The righteous shall shine forth with a light like unto the stars.

Sinners, you may think you are enjoying your life, but you are really mistaken. You have no real joy and you cannot taste of real joy until you are willing to forsake your sinful ways and turn to God. He will show you the path of life, lead you by the still waters and green pastures, with a promise of perfect joy and happiness in heaven.

The reward of the righteous in heaven is great, beyond our comprehension. It is so great that we are told to rejoice because of it. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven."

God has His reason for concealing for the present the glorious state of the righteous. The first reason is the nature of the only true righteousness in man. Man becomes righteous by denying his own righteousness and accepting that of another. This is why it is hidden now. In tears is our faith cradled, and in storms made strong. Another reason we find for this concealment is the discipline by which the righteous are perfected. Faith grows by trials which conceal the glory. In a crown of thorns there is no beauty seen by the eye of the world. In the life to come the present concealment will be removed and the glory will be all the brighter because of it. The image of the heavenly being secretly formed by the silent growth of faith. Who can tell how the souls of the righteous will ripen in the sunlight of Christ's smile.

The beauty of the flower is concealed in the bulb. And just as the flower bursts forth in all its beauty from the concealment of the bulb, so shall it be with the righteous when the last temptation has vanished and the body has been laid to its undisturbed rest. We cannot see the glorious state of the righteous. We can only see the expiration of the animal life. We cannot understand how the Christ-like spirit grew amid the dangers and darkness of this present evil life, nor how faith conquered and the glorious condition is realized in the glory world beyond.

"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honor" (John 12:26). What a consolation! Heaven beginning on earth. What shall it be when we enter there? A still more glorious place, shining with the glory of God's power.

A noted minister began his work in the ministry early in life. He suffered not a little at first because of his humble origin and his unpromising exterior. He was sent one Saturday night to a certain house to be ready for the preaching the next day. The good woman, who did not like his appearance, sent him around to the kitchen. John, the hired man, was surprised to see the minister in the kitchen when he came from work. Rough as he was, he welcomed the despised preacher and tried to cheer him. The minister shared John's meal of porridge, John's bed in the loft, and John's humble breakfast.

He walked with John to the church in the morning. When the service opened, the minister had not spoken long until the congregation saw that there was strength and power in his talk. They could see and feel the Spirit in his sermon. The hostess, who had entertained him so badly began to feel a little uneasy. When the sermon was over there were many invitations for the minister to come home to dinner. The hostess, fearful of losing her now honored guest, begged him to walk home with her. To her surprise he said, "I supped with John, I slept with John, I breakfasted with John, I walked here with John, and I'll walk home with John." When dinner time came he was entreated to come into the chief room, for many friends had gathered desiring to dine with the young minister. But no, he would dine in the kitchen. He had supped with John, he had breakfasted with John, and he would dine with John. They begged him to come into the parlor. At last he consented on condition that John should sit at the same table, "For," he said very properly, "John was with me in my humiliation, and I will not sit down to dine unless he is with me in my exaltation." So they went on till Monday morning. For he said, "John was with me in the beginning and he shall be with me to the end."

Our Master came into the world once and they sent Him into the servants' place where the poor and the despised ones were. Now the name of Christ is honored, and kings and cardinals, popes and bishops say, "Master, come and dine with us." Yes, the

proud emperor and the philosopher would have Him sup with them, but still He says, "No, I was with the poor and afflicted when I was on earth, and I will be with them to the end. And when the great feast is made in heaven, the humble shall sit with me, and the poor and the despised who were not ashamed of Me, of them will I not be ashamed when I come in the glory of my Father and all my holy angels with Me."—C. H. Spurgeon.

We have an inheritance in heaven more certain and more glorious than any earthly inheritance the human imagination can picture. The things of earth change their value, and are often lost entirely. The inheritance reserved in heaven for us is incorruptible, undefiled, unfading. The ravages of time will have no effect upon it. Thieves and enemies cannot touch it. It is reserved forever in heaven for us (I Pet. 1:4).

We sometimes hear of places on the earth where continual summer reigns, where the soil is so fertile and conditions so favorable, that three or more crops can be raised in a single season. In the country in which is the inheritance of the Christian, the climate is perfect, and the conditions are of such a nature that there is a crop every month. In that inheritance of ours, there is the tree of life. We shall no more be barred out from it by the flaming sword at the gate of Eden, but the leaves of the tree shall be "for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2).

Our inheritance is not on earth. Here it would

perish and decay. It is *reserved* for us in *heaven*. Oh, the joy which flows into the soul of every one who has the assurance of this inheritance in his heart, and contemplates its excellent glory! He who gave us this inheritance says, "Behold, I come quickly." In rapturous benediction let us respond, in the words of the beloved apostle, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

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